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[THE OLD LOVE.]

ZILLAH THE GIPSY;

OR,

LOVE'S CAPTIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Violet's Victims," "Lord Jasper's Secret," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

PRINCE ANATOLE.

In truth, my lord, you seem too light of heart,
Too sprightly and companionable a man
To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.

He was not in the least like an Italian noble, this Roman prince. He was not graceful or winning in manner, softened by a smile, or won by a glance, but cold and cynical, very much bored by life, and feeling as nearly miserable as such a temperament could do at the loss of his beautiful young Arabian wife.

Just at the present moment the prince is standing by the library window of his splendid palace (for again, unlike Italian noblemen, he was rich), holding a portrait in his delicately-shaped hand—a likeness of his dead princess.

"Is it, too, a judgment on me that she should fade and die when I sought to tame her?" he murmurs, and wishes he had left the Arab chieftain's child to the freedom and wildness of her

desert, ere she sickened and died of civilisation.

She must have been superbly lovely, this young Arabian.

Great dark blue eyes, an olive skin, clouds of black hair flowing far below her waist in soft dusky curls—not the smooth ringlets of European women—but fluffy and wild, in harmony with her nature.

"She couldn't stand the cage," the prince says to himself in Italian, "but was wild to the last. I think she never got over the effect of tight shoes and tighter stays. Poor Selika! the companion of your horse and father, you must have fired a poet's imagination, but you began to weary mine. Therefore, cara mia, it may be better so."

He is smiling dreamily as he closes the portrait, and then walking hastily across the floor rings the bell.

As the servant answers it the prince says, in his courteous way:

"I would see my child," and then, as the door closes, the frown deepens on his brow, and he may be said to look cruel and vindictive.

An Arab servant soon after enters with the child, a little girl about a year old, and, at a sign from the prince, lays it on a velvet cushion.

"Leave me," he says, quietly, in his soft voice, "for a few minutes with my daughter."

The emphasis on the last word was not pleasant, he had passionately longed for a son and heir, and the Arabian girl in dying had only left him this legacy of her love—a little daughter. The prince looked at the child, and the child looked at him.

"Your birth caused your mother's death," he

said, slowly, "and so I shall never love you. Had you been a boy"—the prince paused in his restless walk and stopped before the child—"everything would have been different."

People said the prince was a very unnatural man in some things, and surely these words proved it.

The little baby lying on the velvet cushion before him had an angel's beauty of feature, and cooed and stretched out her little dimpled arms.

"Those eyes prove that she will one day love," he went on, coldly.

But he had no sympathy, no tenderness for his dead wife's legacy.

The prince himself had never known the meaning of love, because he had none of those qualities in his soul whence love springs.

He thought it no harm to deceive; he could be sweet and caressing to gain a purpose, to serve an end, or to be amused, telling pretty nearly the same thing to every woman he wooed, viz., that she had alone aroused his heart's love, etc.

But with the Arabian girl he had married all this was different.

He had been compelled to fulfil his pledge in marrying her out of sheer terror—for when hard driven the prince was a consummate coward.

"Why was not your mother content?" he went on, talking to the baby. "She began to sicken and die as soon as she came to Italy; I gave her costly presents—jewels, laces, furs, and all the things for which most women sell their bodies and souls, and yet she was not satisfied."

The child had grown frightened of him by this time, and set up a piercing cry.

"Ugh!" he cried, putting his hands to his

ears. "What discord, and in a musician's ears too. Yelling little wretch," said the affectionate father, "perverse little mortal—I will leave you. But for your grandfather's threat you would have been kicking about in Arabia for the rest of your life, nameless and accursed."

He had not once kissed his child, although she had her mother's eyes. Kissing infants was to be sure not much in his line, and its shrieks upset his nerves and digestion. He rang again sharply for the nurse.

"And now to get rid of my responsibility," he said, drawing a carved antique desk to his side, "and at the same time to provide a nice, kind, and pious mother for my daughter."

The table at which he sat was of finest and costliest Florentine mosaic, a few very choice pictures hung from the walls, a Venus and a Magdalen faced each other. Some of the paintings were by English masters, for the prince, to do him justice, appreciated England and indulged in no over-strained enthusiasm about his native land's present art and dreams of freedom, and preferred London to Rome, except in that matter of climate.

"Shall I marry again?" he mused, and then laughed aloud. "Ah, no, ma foi! marriage is like a heavy pudding. I will be free for ever."

The prince's sister, Lady Alesia, to whom he was now writing, had been educated and brought up in England, but she was in reduced circumstances and a widow, and, being full of vanity and selfishness, loathed the narrow restrictions of her lot.

"DEAR ALESIA," wrote the prince, "my old restless fever has broken out again—I must travel, stagnation is killing me. Our Carnival is my detestation, and although the young Duchess of Ferrari is, I hear, preparing a superb costume to fascinate me in as 'La Favorita,' your brother has his old nomadic instinct of wandering. What says our motto, 'Jo resta—tu t'en vas.' Turn the butterfly, let others be the rose. Ay di mi! this Roman air makes me languid and feverish. But to come to the point. I have, as you know, been blessed by Providence with a daughter, but I doubt my powers of guardianship. Will you, my dear Alesia, come over and take charge of my little girl? When she's sixteen or seventeen I may care to be reminded of her existence. I am not paternal, as you know, domestic ties have no peculiar charm for me, and when I tell you that Court beauties and intrigues have lost their charm you need be surprised at none of my future eccentricities. So, Alesia, come to Italy, leave behind your English prejudices for cleanliness and fresh air, if you have any, and make yourself content here. Our women are made for love and nonsense, a mask and a song, you know—dear, silky, frivolous creatures, mixtures of children and cats, you remember them of old. But come to Rome, take possession of my palace and daughter, and let your brother be again the pleasure-loving artist of old, Giuseppe Bardo, while you play the part of mother to my child. Thy brother from the heart,

"PAOLO."

After writing this he laughed again, ate a large dish of macaroni, followed by oil and tomatoes, and fetching a mandolin sang some charming national barcaroles and arias.

The prince was at last almost happy. His sister, Lady Alesia, would take care of his child and he would be free.

When the Lady Alesia Cruikshank received this interesting missive she was just wondering if she could borrow a fifty-pound note of Paolo—if not of him, then of somebody else.

He was not, strictly speaking, a generous brother, but then he was so careless and pleasure-loving, generosity or care for his sister was hardly to be expected, for how could she minister to his pleasures?

She was very pleased at the invitation, though she said little—only sat for an hour in deep thought with the prince's letter spread out before her on the table as if some scheme filled her mind.

She was now companion to the Duchess of Heath, and Lady Alesia hated her slavery. She was Italian born, fond of pleasure too, but in a different way to her brother, and her deceptions, which were instinctive, were perhaps less cruel in their results.

"This is good news," Lady Alesia muttered, her chin on her hands.

Eaton Square in this month seemed very hateful to her senses. The Duchess of Heath was a Scotch woman, and very mean. Rigid Puritanism, cheap fish and oatmeal every day in the week are apt to provoke worldly reflections in the mind of a Catholic, and the duchess, who had vague ideas that Italy was chiefly famed for its ices and confectionery, wished to raise the tone of Lady Alesia's mind and morals by disagreeable penances, in which frivolity could not mingle.

Lady Alesia was about nine-and-twenty, a very handsome woman, and a born coquette.

General Cruikshank had distinguished himself in action, but, unfortunately, died without a pension—for it was the pension, not the general, Lady Alesia had particularly wished to secure.

"Of course I will go to Italy," she said, aloud. "Dear Paolo. How nice of him! and so lucky that stupid little Arabian girl died in the very nick of time."

The door opened, and the Duchess of Heath in black satin entered, and looked surprised to find the Lady Alesia doing next to nothing. Her cheek flushed, and a delicate sparkle was in those black eyes where lightning often flashed. "Idle?" said her grace, with the faintest tinge of reproach in the question.

"Yes, dreaming," answered Lady Alesia, folding up her brother's letter.

She longed for the warmth and beauty of Italy. How thankful she would be to leave the dark and somewhat stuffy rooms of this mansion—where she could not be said to live, but merely to exist.

There was death in her soul here surely, getting up to the same dull routine, almost to the same meals every day, with no money, no dress, no lovers, opera airs forbidden, and long leading articles in the "Times" to read aloud. No wonder Lady Alesia blessed Prince Anatole.

"Nothing better to do than dream?" asked the duchess, always with that faint irony so bitter from the employer to the employed.

Lady Alesia shrugged her handsome shoulders, a luxury she could not usually indulge in.

"I shall be compelled to leave you suddenly, dear duchess," she said, in her soft, silvery tones. "The Prince Anatole, my brother, wishes me to go to Italy to take care of his motherless child."

Her voice trembled from the emotion of utter joy. Intrigues, coquetry, triumph, all would follow as a matter of course.

"You are glad to go," said the duchess, quietly. "You will be in your element there. Will you take your child with you?"

Lady Alesia was glad. Her life hitherto had been a long failure.

"I regret to leave you, to whom I am warmly attached," she said, in her false, silky way, that never could deceive the other, "but, of course, I am glad to be able to have my pet with me."

"No, no, Alesia, that won't do—artful as you are you will not make me believe you regret the change—and yet Heaven knows that I pity this motherless child of Prince Anatole from my heart."

Lady Alesia smiled. All her tyrannical instinct, her love of power could be gratified—sole controller of the fate of this infant, her education and training would be left entirely to her care. And there was another thought, dark too and sinuous in its workings, that crossed her mind, and which made her say:

"We must wait."

A few days after Lady Alesia, to her infinite content, was en route for Italy, looking young, handsome and light-hearted, transformed by joy into a thoroughly bewitching creature.

She had kissed the duchess and embraced nearly everyone in the mansion, save the tall footmen in plush and powder, and sang a light

opera all through as a vent to her feelings on the eve of her departure. Never had any other woman breathed so many blessings on the prince's head before.

Prince Anatole was again looking at that portrait of his Arabian wife when Lady Alesia and her child arrived at the palace.

She threw herself into his arms with a burst of tears, and the prince, who hated emotion, shivered.

"So good of you, dearest Paolo, to think of me. And I am longing to see the darling, to whom I shall be all that a mother can be."

Her large eyes gleamed brilliantly through her tears. The child would be so utterly in her power, but all her maternal love was given to another.

"You take my breath away, Alesia," he said, closing the portrait. He really knew very little about his sister. They had been parted for years, and he saw a touch of art in this simulated gush.

"Can I see the baby?" she asked, feeling repulsed, and inwardly resenting it.

"And your appetite?" he said, smiling. "The baby can surely wait. Hunger is a fact—sentiment, particularly your sentiment, Alesia, is cloud-like and unreal as the mists."

She was silent, but nevertheless she disliked him. He read her like a book, and she wished to suggest chapter and verse very different to those he might peruse, and, indeed, already knew.

"Some wine and macaroni," cried the prince, as the door opened and a servant brought in the wine and viands on a silver tray.

The sight of macaroni banished all dislike of the prince and memory of the baby. Lady Alesia ate with the voracity of a peasant, and he knew the wine would unloose her tongue presently.

Her small, sharp teeth next attacked a melon, which she said was delicious; but her real enthusiasm had been displayed over her favourite dish. In fact, macaroni washed down with fine Beaune was the only thing on which her admiration had been ever really sincere and unadulterated.

"And our English lovers?" said the prince, drily, as his last glass of wine was swallowed. "Lord Carden, Sir Frederick Phipps, and all the other unpronounceable names?"

"Beasts, all of them," said his sister, still sincerely, speaking this time in Italian, and using a tooth-pick.

The prince laughed in his pleasant way. "Then they declined to relieve you of the burden of widowhood. Poor Alesia!"

"I hate the English," she said, drily, "although our mother was an Englishwoman and we've been so much there."

"They take life too seriously, I admit, and even their falsehoods lack finesse. They have one art, though: they can hide their feelings, and are not soft and cry-babies like us."

She laughed in her turn.

"Is softness your weakness, my prince? You, who can leave your only child till she is sixteen?"

"This is not matter of jest, Alesia," he said, angrily. "Be careful. You have only felt one side of the velvet glove. I may or may not see her, as my mood depends. Use her well, treat her kindly—no traps—no arts—no cruelty—and as little religion as you please. As for her morals," and he bowed his head sarcastically, "they will be safe with you."

For answer—her cheeks in a flame—Lady Alesia helped herself to some more wine, and then took a cigarette.

She crossed her arms, and then her legs, and in every sense made herself at home.

Seeing this, the prince, rising, rang the bell.

"We wish to see the child," he said to the servant, as he rolled a cigarette of strong opium-ized tobacco.

The Lady Alesia started to her feet at the entrance of the Arabian nurse, but she did not throw aside her cigarette till the prince said, in his smooth, mocking way:

"Smoke does not agree with infants, my dear

sister. Come, let me see if you can hold the child prettily and gracefully."

Then she stretched out her arms and took Selika's child and held her fast. Poor, smiling Selika, who had far better have loved her horse than the prince. Did Lady Alesia pause for a moment to think of all the dreams, and hope, and love that may have once glorified the dead woman's thoughts? No, very different were the Lady Alesia's musings. The limpid depths of her dark eyes glowed as she kissed the baby on the brow. Could the mother's spirit be watching, or ever influence the destiny of her child?

"She will be beautiful," Lady Alesia said, after gazing at the features.

The prince nodded.

"Arabian blood is in her veins, Alesia, and that can never be tamed. I killed her mother when I caged her. Don't forget this. Give her liberty. Watch her ways. Nothing alters racial characteristics."

"Discipline may," said his sister.

"No, never—only the force of a mighty passion."

"We shall see," she said, returning the child to the nurse. It had not screamed or cried, only looked at Lady Alesia with wistful innocence in its large, sweet, mournful eyes.

A few hours after Prince Anatole left his palace, and the Lady Alesia in possession, for foreign wanderings.

"And now for Thyra," muttered the prince, looking grave for the first time that day, as, a week or two after quitting Rome, he entered a village where the blossoms of the vines perfumed the still air, and the beauty and odorous shade of flower-starred lanes invited rest.

CHAPTER II.

THE GIPSIES' CAMP.

If I love thee—what is that to thee?

It was a strange, wild scene, under the moonlight of a Southern clime. Twenty or thirty gypsies of ages varying from ten years to eighty were sitting round different fires, and the children gathering sticks and pieces of wood threw them from time to time into the flames or else prodded the fire with faggots which, when lighted, they waved about in the air.

The men were for the most part smoking, and conspicuous among them for height and grandeur of form was one called Black David, or the "Captain," a lawless, handsome, dare-devil fellow, who ought to have been transported years ago for passing counterfeit coin in Paris, but, having baffled his pursuers, had thrown in his lot with the gypsies. He was a crack shot, a matchless horseman, he would bring in gold and booty when least expected in a most mysterious way. He was on friendly terms with the most notorious of brigands, on whose head a price was set by Government, and yet from sheer respect for his courage, which was of the physical, bull-dog kind, Black David ruled the gypsies as a king.

He was now lying lazily before the largest fire, his splendid limbs reclining on a flower-decked bank; his dress was of dark colours, except the waistcoat, which was crimson, and a curious, Spanish-looking hat was perched sideways on his head; he had also a pack of cards in his hand and a guitar by his side. Professing to speak Italian only, he was really master of half a dozen languages, the use of which had been extremely useful to him on occasions when, for instance, he could explain a helpless prisoner's murmurs to the brigands, and gain a double ransom for them in consequence.

"I've made a discovery," Black David is saying, rolling over on his side and throwing out the king of spades, and at his voice every gipsy is silent, even including the little children, who contented themselves with grinning and waving their burning faggots.

"Yes, by the holy St. Anthony, I believe I've run a traitor to earth!"

He is gazing at the upturned face of the king

of clubs as if it amused him, and at the same time he turns the knife in his breast.

Black David is as familiar with the use of the knife as any Neapolitan peasant, but, for all that, he carries a revolver in his breast coat pocket. He has travelled in many cities and knows its value.

"A traitor!" they cry. "Is it the priest that tried to convert you?"

"Me?" echoes Black David, laughing. "Bless you, he's harmless as a lamb, and more frightened of me than of Satan. The traitor I mean is a sleek, soft-voiced rascal, with plenty of vinegar sauce at the tip of his tongue. D'ye remember, friends, the artist that painted Thyra years ago on the borders of the New Forest in England?"

Some shake their heads, two or three old women mutter vaguely.

Black David rises to his feet, shakes himself like a lion, tears the king of clubs in half, and sticks his thumbs in the corners of his crimson waistcoat.

"He means mischief, he's about to hunt us down and run us into the earth like foxes before they're butchered. 'The gypsies are brigands—they shall perish.' This is his cry at Courts where he is in favour, but Black David has been one too many for him at last."

He is taking a piece of cord from his pocket and moving lazily across the grass. A dim light burns in one of the distant tents, and towards this Black David goes.

He enters in leisurely as if taking a savage pleasure in the agony of his captive, bound with ropes, sitting mute and dumb-stricken before him.

"Ah, my friend, and so we are still safe and caged," says Black David, and knots the cord at one end; those slender hands may not be quite sufficiently secured.

He turns the light on a little fuller, and the pinched, care-worn features of Prince Anatole are revealed; he looks bewildered in the dumb terror that strikes him mute.

"I know you now," said the captain, advancing to his prisoner, "lover of the Duchesse of Ferrari, breaker of the bank at Monaco, friend of Madame Nadia—what a dancer the woman is, her legs are like two india-rubber balls—Oran, my friend, the jest does not please you."

"Name your price and let me go," says the prince, and tears glitter in his eyes—his native "softness" asserting itself at last.

"The price of my revenge. Ah! no, my prince, there is no question of money between us. You will die."

"Die!"

A faint moan broke from the prince, of which, however, he seemed ashamed.

The cynic and philosopher feels very mortal at that moment.

"You are our enemy, particularly mine," says Black David, tightening his cord round those delicate, womanly wrists and arms. "It is war to the knife between us. If you escape I shall be your victim. But you will not escape, the score has run quite long enough between us. You must pay it."

A spasm of agony darts over the prince's pale features, but he does not struggle or even speak. His head sinks low on his breast, and the tears fall one by one.

Of what does he think in those bitter moments—of his little abandoned daughter, or his dead wife, of all his sins and treacheries, his caresses and lies?

Black David is peeling a knotted stick, glancing at his captive from time to time under his long, heavy brows.

"How shall I kill you?" he says, kicking a bunch of grapes aside with his stockinged foot. "In what way may your royal highness prefer to take his last journey?"

At that moment a tall and stately figure passes by the entrance of the tent, and a woman glances in and then glides swiftly onwards.

But the prisoner, his senses sharpened by anguish and fear, has seen her. Not so Black David.

The prince draws a deep and sobbing breath.

"I think I shall leave you all night to repent in," Black David says, languidly; "don't let your nerves irritate you, however, 'twould be a pity for the Epicurean and Stoic to be false at the last to all his creeds. In the morning I shall kill you as I would a slippery reptile dangerous to all."

And yet Black David is inwardly wondering if he shall make terms for himself with the prince—leave the gypsies and flash again like a meteor in Parisian society.

"Good-night, prince," he mutters, sauntering towards the entrance of the tent. "Sleep well. Addio."

But he glances over his shoulder to be sure all is safe; he will visit his prisoner very frequently in the night hours.

In the meantime the gipsy woman has crept towards one of the caravans, and is hastily changing her attire.

Now and then she smiles to herself as she ties back her long black hair, over which she draws a red and amber handkerchief and then a slouch hat; she dyes her skin still darker, and lastly throws a well-worn traveller's cloak about her form, so that it would be impossible to recognise her sex.

Then creeping stealthily past the tents she passes Black David, who is still peeling his stick, and merely murmurs:

"Good-night, friend," thinking it is a friendly vagrant.

"Dear Heaven, if I should be too late," she cries, her lips quivering; "if he should be dead."

She herself feels no fear.

If Black David should stand before her, and she knowing that he will bathe his knife in her blood, her great heart will not quail.

No torture could ever wring a cry from those strong mobile lips.

Then, without once glancing around or behind her, the gipsy woman plunges with panther-like step into the tent where the bound captive sits by the dim lamp light.

"Thyra!" cries the prince, lifting his head.

"Ah! then you live, my beloved, and I can save you."

She throws herself before him, quickly cutting the ropes that are branding his delicate flesh.

Can this be the same man whose distinguished appearance was ever the admiration of courtiers?

He looks pitifully shaken and frightened.

"Will he find me after all?" mutters the prince, indifferent to the love that is shown in every look and gesture.

He only thinks of his own safety.

"Ah, no! my Giuseppe," the gipsy says, tenderly, "I mixed something with his drink that will make him sleep long enough for you to be far away. See, you are safe, you are free."

The prince shivers—his bloodshot eyes in strange contrast with his pallor.

"Why don't you murder the wolf?"

"Because I dare not," smiting her hands. "Sins speak—but murder shrieks aloud."

"Dare not, Thyra, and you tell me you love me when you let that tiger live to destroy me. Ah! some day I know, some day, he will plunge his knife in my heart."

The heart in truth is hard and cold enough, but she throws herself on his breast and weeps.

"My beloved, you have returned to Thyra, have you not? Do you remember our happy home in the sweet English cottage? In all my dreams and delirium I used to see it—the little garden with the flowers we planted, the large room with the paintings, where I sat to you day after day, and the long winter, ungrateful one, when you never returned."

She is holding his hands in her strong, sunburnt ones. By this time Prince Anatole is in no mood for romance.

This chapter in his life he thought had ended long ago. But, supple and artful, he must resort to subterfuge. He must soothe Thyra and escape.

"Come out on to the mountains, where we can talk in safety," he whispers. "Every shadow,

every movement here speaks of Manuel. I know him—the brigand chief, the gipsy king."

The prince grinds his teeth, thinking of his enemy, and he does not breathe freely till they are two miles at least away beyond the mountains.

He does not care that she is a woman and wearied.

"Can we not rest?" asks Thyra, throwing the heavy travelling cloak down in a recess—a sudden faintness overpowers her.

"I must find a safe asylum first," the prince answers, "in reach of soldiers if need be, to protect us."

She staggers after him a little while longer, then halts, trembles, and falls.

The prince curses this misadventure, but he does not leave her to die like a dog on the roadside. He fetches water from a running stream, and bathes her temples.

He too is tired, and believes they are beyond pursuit.

Soon Thyra revives and then looks at him steadily in the faint light of dawn.

She does not know as yet that he is a prince, he is only her artist lover, Giuseppe Bardo.

"The promise," she mutters, tossing back the red and amber handkerchief and slouch hat from her head. Her black hair encircles her like an ebon mane, and she touches his arm. "The oath that you swore to me, Giuseppe, d'ye remember it?"

The prince remembers, but her look is so terrible that a stifled sigh escapes him.

"Well?" he says, carelessly, "you are beautiful enough still, my Thyra, to enforce any bond."

"You are to me what the sun is to the earth," she answers, reverently lifting his hand to her brow. "That is all I can answer."

He turns and kisses her on the lips—he forgets to listen for sounds on the distant breeze. Has she not given him his life? If he can only escape from the place altogether—that is all he prays to do.

"The old love—the dear old love, Giuseppe. I have been so nearly mad thinking you had forsaken me; but then I knew a Georgio could not always do as he wished. You saw me in Rome and you came to me here."

Her head on his breast again, her arms about his neck. This ecstatic fervour had yet its charm for him. Dangerous pastime even for a prince and villain, seeing what her fierce nature is.

She has followed and sought him everywhere. A gloomy light spread itself over his features.

"For the sake of the child, Giuseppe, marry me as you promised. You must love him—strong, brave and beautiful—your dear little son, Michael."

"The child," he repeats, frowning.

"Little Michael—my son," she answers; but she does not see the prince's expression as she watches that eastern dawn.

"Impossible, my dear Thyra," he murmurs, in his soft tones, "you are a gipsy."

"I have saved you twice," she says, her voice steady if hoarse now, and her head raised. She no longer looks at the sky, but at the blackened shadows of a huge ravine that yawns before them.

"I admit it," he answers, a quiver in his utterance.

"And always at the risk of my life, Giuseppe; were Black David to know I had saved you, I must die."

"There is a price set on his head; ere tomorrow the king's soldiers shall be shown his lair, living or dead the price will be paid for his body," mutters the prince, drawing some brandy from his flask.

"But I do not choose that he shall perish at your word," said Thyra, with a superb gesture. "I begin to know what you are at last. Liar and hypocrite, false as the paid assassin, venomous as the serpent, you were not worthy of my love, and I cannot be silent and smile in my grief and pain. I am not a Georgio."

The prince sneers snakily—the brandy gives him courage to be cruel.

"You do not choose that he shall perish? I

could sweep away the whole nest of you vermin to-morrow off the face of the earth, as I will."

He sets his teeth, and Thyra, pointing to the ravine, shudders.

"Why do I not hurl you beneath those rocks?" she mutters. "I could do it, for I am strong."

He let the tide of passion pass, as he knew it soon would.

"Because your love is stronger, Thyra. Let it speak."

"I will be revenged," she says, slowly, "I will find out whom you love, and strike at your heart through them."

"My heart," he answers, with an odd, shadowy smile. "My good Thyra, it is a most convenient organ. It is a lute on which sorrow's fingers cannot strike. Your ever too fertile imagination is again at fault, my poor girl. Had you been educated the world would never have held you. Be assured that I love none."

"Oh, Michael, my little Michael!" she murmurs, "a second Hagar and Ishmael are we? Oh! that this man should be your father!"

She has fancied he has always loved her. He has put her off with messages and letters for so long. Did she not warn him of a secret conspiracy, in which one of a mysterious brotherhood had sworn to have his life? And this was her reward—her sole reward.

The prince, clever and wily as he is, does not understand the depths of a purely savage nature and its supreme fidelity.

"Nearly all men deceive women," he said, after a pause. He admits his falseness with the frankness of all men without honour or a conscience.

Thyra's threats discomposed him, and he was thinking he should infinitely prefer the comforts of a well-furnished bed-room to a couch of grass surrounded by desolate leagues of mountains.

"I shall never try to save your life again," she says, in a faint voice, "because I shall think of Michael—he is your son."

"Is he, indeed?" answers Prince Anatole, indifferently, as if he were crushing a fly.

"Michael changed my love for you, sir," she says, coldly. "For myself I care nothing. You were welcome to destroy me—but not him."

"Perhaps you do not know whom you are speaking to," the prince says, preparing to leave her. "There can be no question of marriage between us, my good Thyra, you, a strolling-player and gipsy-born, and I shall not be tempted to seek you again, believe me, after my last reception."

Thyra, silent and too startled for speech, fixed as a statue, looks into that gloomy face with its cynical discontent. Then she speaks.

"If you will not marry me, adopt our son. Let him live as a child of yours should."

Prince Anatole shakes his head. Never more will he venture into danger, or risk his life in search of the wild and picturesque. These rough women's passions jar on his nerves.

Her lips are tight-set, and the heavy Egyptian brows darken as if all light has left her soul for ever.

"To-night will I know your real name," she says, in a low tone, "and from this hour will I work woe on you and yours."

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

PETROLEUM FURNACE FOR BALLOONS.—At a recent meeting of the Balloon Society of Great Britain the Committee resolved to initiate a series of experiments at Clapham with hot-air balloons. An improved petroleum lamp has recently been invented which was considered to be fully equal to any known miner's lamp in safety, while the consumption of the petroleum is so regulated as to maintain the inflation of the balloon for the space of four days.

ECONOMICAL COINING.—In coining 20,000,000 dols. in silver and 22,000,000 dols. in gold at the San Francisco Mint, in 1878, there were lost only 29 dols. The carpet, which had been down five years, was taken up last spring, cut up into small pieces, and burned in pans. The debris was put through the same process as the mining dust, and there were got from the old carpet 2,500 dols.!

SULPHUR AS A LUBRICANT.—Von Heeren proposes a method of cooling hot journals by a mixture of sulphur and oil and grease. The fine metal dust formed when a journal runs hot, and which strongly acts upon both journals and bearing, forms a sulphide of iron. This compound, which grows soft and greasy, does not cause any appreciable amount of friction. It has been very successfully used by the steamers on the North German Lloyds.

ELECTRIC LIGHT ON A PASSENGER STEAMER.—On the arrival of the Columbia at Portland, Oregon, last month, the chief engineer reported that the Edison's electric lamp had worked with entire satisfaction during the whole trip in all kinds of weather. The ordinary skill of the engine room was sufficient for the management of the electric generators and the lights. This is the first application of small or incandescent electric lamps to the lighting of a ship's stateroom and saloons.

CONTROL OF THE WEATHER.—An enterprising American patentee proposes to control the rainfall in any locality by means of explosives and detonating compounds, raised to the cloud-levels by means of single balloons or parachutes, or in some cases by fleets of small balloons, the charges being simultaneously exploded by means of an electric connection. Another inventor, Mr. G. H. Bell, goes so far as to send a plan of a rain tower to the Scientific American by which he promises not only to produce rain when it is needed, but to prevent it from falling when it is not desired.

SELF-STARTING TEAM-CAR.—A patent has been taken by Mr. Hansell, of Philadelphia, for a novel car starter, which stores up the momentum of the car when stopped, by means of a spiral spring, in such a manner that when the horse begins to pull it is immediately propelled about a yard forward, and the horse, instead of wasting his strength by a pull against the usual dead weight, requires to apply very little more force than when the car is in full motion.

DIFFUSION OF ELECTRIC LIGHTS.—M. Clémandot uses fine glass wool for diffusing the electric beam, instead of ground or opal glass. The glass wool, which is very fine, is placed in tubes, and the latter are united at their sides so as to form a lantern, conical in shape, with the taper downwards. The tubes are closed at top and bottom to exclude dust, and it is found that only about 15 per cent. of the light is absorbed. The opacity can, however, be increased by inserting more "wool," and the light can be easily coloured if desired.

THE TELEPHONE AND FIRE-DAMP.—It is well known that if a long dry tube, open at both ends, be held over a jet of burning hydrogen, a musical sound is produced, the pitch and quality of which vary with the length, thickness and diameter of the tube. It has been proposed to adapt such a tube to the safety lamp underground, and to place it near a telephone in communication with another telephone in the manager's office on the surface. The alteration of the sound, due to a greater or less admixture of gas with the air of the mine, would warn the manager of the state of the atmosphere in the workings.

VITALITY OF SEEDS.—The duration of the vitality of seeds has lately been attracting attention. It appears that some seeds such as those of the China-aster will not germinate unless sown in the first season after they are gathered and that all suffer more or less by keeping; but it is said to have been proved beyond dispute that seeds of the *Sida Abutilon* will fructify after a lapse of twenty-five years. The vitality of the seeds is destroyed by saturation with fresh water, but not much influenced by salt water or extremes of dry cold.



[MOTHER AND SON.]

THE FORTUNES OF ELFRIDA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Within a Maze," "Won Without Wooing,"
and other Interesting Stories.*

CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. WRAXALL INDIGNANT.

Yes, I must bid adieu to pleasure
With her ever-fleeting train,
And her song of joyous measure
I may never sing again.

"WHEN Mrs. Caveall returns ask her to come to my boudoir," said Mrs. Wraxall to the footman who opened the door, and, informing Elfrida, a little curtly, that she wished to be alone, sailed upstairs and shut herself in her room.

The woman of the world was angry, very angry, for she felt sure that something of a damaging nature to Elfrida was abroad, and it might be of serious import to herself also. Lord Debenly had been so very decided in his attentions and had thrown out so many hints that it was impossible for her to have been mistaken. He undoubtedly intended to propose to Elfrida, but something had arisen to cause him to change his mind. What was it?

It was not that he had ceased to admire her—men are not quite so fickle as to love and forget in a day—nor was it on the ground of having rivals, for that would only stimulate him to an earlier proposal. What then was it that had come in and upset all her calculations? What blight had descended upon the fortunes of Elfrida?

She liked her beautiful young guest, but she liked her position more, and she was sorry the

girl had come to her to be introduced into the world, the world of Mrs. Wraxall, of course, consisting of the upper circle in which she ruled, and she wanted to talk to Mrs. Caveall about the best course to pursue.

In a little while, that lady, with a joyous face, covered with a flimsy veil of mock sorrow, entered the room.

"This is a bad business," said Mrs. Wraxall; "Elfrida's prospects are ruined. Not another man worth having will look at her unless it can be shown that she rejected Debenly."

"Which she certainly did not," said Mrs. Caveall, with unctuous emphasis.

"No; and you seem to rather enjoy it all. I daresay you have some good reason for being so, but I do not want to inquire into that. What I want to know is—Can you tell me what it is that has driven him away?"

"I can only guess."
"Even in that you have the advantage of me," said Mrs. Wraxall, "for it appears in my eyes an unfathomable mystery."

"I suppose that the story spoken of in *Easterley* has got about," replied Mrs. Caveall.

"What story is that?" asked Mrs. Wraxall, with flashing eyes.

"Oh! about Elfrida being the daughter of one of Jacob Brierly's workwomen. You have heard of that and—"

"You know I have heard nothing of the sort, and how dare you tell me so?" broke in Mrs. Wraxall, with a furious gesture. "Do you think if I had I would have had her here?"

Mrs. Caveall was terrified, for Mrs. Wraxall was the last link that bound her to the society she loved, and if that were broken she would be adrift among people her arrogance led her to hate—the would-be ladies and gentlemen of upper middle life. She only intended to bring Mrs. Wraxall into the list of those who were sneering at Elfrida, and, in the attempt, had brought trouble upon herself.

"I—I always thought you knew it," she stammered.

"Your audacity amazes me," said Mrs. Wraxall, sitting very upright with a hard look in her face. "I ask you how dare you bring the girl here to me, knowing that an exposure would be my ruin? Do you know what this affair will cost me? What do you fancy society will say at my introducing a girl of her parentage and history into its midst? I shall be shut out of every house worth visiting."

"I am sure if I—"

"Don't interrupt me, Mrs. Caveall, but hear me out, and then leave my house. You have imposed upon my cordiality, and taken advantage of my generous friendship. Who are you that I should have you here? I agreed to let you come because you were my friend once, and I thought I could trust you. You told me the girl was all that could be desired, a protégée of Mrs. Harvard's, who, I know, was a most unexceptionable woman, with rare gifts—it was an unalloyed pleasure to see her receive her guests—and now you tell me that I know the true story of this girl, who is an impostor, palmed upon me for a double purpose—hers and yours. What will be said of me? You ought to know, and you knew it must be said some day, for the thing was sure to come out."

All this and much more the angry woman said, and from her point of view spoke with good cause, for it was a very serious thing for her. Elfrida had rushed into a prominent position, and society, ready to worship any new idol, had fallen at her feet. Of course it would not have done so had it not believed her to be all that Mrs. Wraxall said she was. An introduction from a lady of her position with Elfrida's beauty had been sufficient to bridge over such difficulties as barred the way to a stranger.

But now that there were dark stories about—and dark stories with a foundation that could not be shaken—society would demand of Mrs. Wraxall an explanation, or, at least, expect one. And what explanation could the leader of her set give but the true one, which would only stamp

a seal upon her fate? She might be received still, but her leadership was gone for ever. Descending to the ranks after having held an officer's commission is very unpalatable.

To people of large ideas, to those who fix their hearts on better things, all this may appear to be very pitiful, but it must be remembered that those who live for the world alone cling desperately to such rewards as it can give in the way of homage, riches or favour, and when such a woman as Mrs. Wrexall loses what she has lived for she is cast utterly adrift. She has entered the dark portal, and abandons hope.

So do not marvel at her anger or that it led to a complete severance between her and her guests. Mrs. Caveall had no defence to make and could explain away nothing. It was all her own doing and the full brunt of it rightly descended upon the mischief-maker's head.

"You can stay here a day or two if you like," curtly said Mrs. Wrexall, "until you have decided where to go, but I do not wish to see you. Your meals you can have in your own rooms."

That was all the leave-taking she favoured her old friend with, and she left Mrs. Caveall in despair to break the news to Elfrida. This she did in her own way, declaring that Mrs. Wrexall's anger certainly arose from Elfrida having failed to secure Lord Debenly, her heart having been set upon the match.

And when Elfrida heard of her dismissal and the offer to stay a few days she indignantly refused to remain an hour. She began packing at once, dispensing with her maid, and desired Mrs. Caveall to fix upon a place to pass the night.

"It is too late," she said, "to return home. But to-morrow we will go down to Easterley."

"Better first communicate with Mr. Brierly," said Mrs. Caveall. "He might be alarmed by our sudden return. Besides, we may not have lost all our friends in society."

Elfrida made a deprecating motion with her hand.

"It matters little whether we have or not," she said. "I have no further desire to be in society. If nothing else has revolted me, Mrs. Wrexall has. She can have no heart."

"There is such a thing as living down talk," suggested Mrs. Caveall. "Suppose we do not get the very cream, there are still a great number of people who hang upon the outskirts of people like ourselves, and would be glad to receive you. They are rich, and entertain well—"

"I will have nothing more to do with them at present," said Elfrida. "And I want to get away to Easterley into our quiet place to rest and think. I want to hide my head for awhile, so that I may think out some scheme of revenge. For avenged I will be."

"My dear child!"

"No—do not attempt to soothe me or to try to hide the truth. I begin to see how mean and despicable they have been, and what a narrow escape I have had of settling down with a worthless set. But mark this: I will go up higher—higher—and then let those who have slighted me look to it."

"You will remain until I have heard from Mrs. Brierly," said Mrs. Caveall, who had other things different to Elfrida's revenge in her head.

"In seclusion?—yes."

And then it suddenly flashed upon Mrs. Caveall that these few days might be turned to good account for her son, Mr. Stapleton. With this new hope she forgave him the part he had played, and proceeded to manoeuvre again on his account.

"Would you mind Stapleton calling to see us?" she said, coaxingly. "I may want him to help me in many little ways."

"I shall be glad to see him," said Elfrida, who had rather a kind remembrance of her unsuccessful lover. His conduct towards her had at least been honest, so she said she would be glad to see him, and meant what she said. Disheartened, discouraged, and awakened by her sudden fall, she stood in need of some support, and the

sight of any face with any pretension to honesty and goodwill in it would be welcome.

CHAPTER XV.

DEEPER STILL.

Lo! there to mock the houseless head
Huge palkows arise,
Whose board uncharitably spread
The unbidden guest denies.

THE letter Mrs. Cundleton Caveall wrote to her son was well adapted for turning him from his resolve not to desert, even for an hour, from the life he was leading, which he rightly considered was calculated to make an honest, useful man of him. She began by saying she hoped he had forgotten her last letter, hastily written in a moment of grief, and then proceeded to give an account of the retirement of herself and Elfrida from the doubtful brilliancy and many allurements of society.

"In the future we have resolved to receive only our friends," she wrote, "and as you are my son, and Miss Brierly considers you to be her friend, we hope to see you. Come as soon as you can—to-morrow, if possible—as we are much in need of a little assistance, such as you or some other man can give us. We have only just taken apartments in Woburn Place, and do not expect that any one will call for some days. Your presence will therefore be very welcome to us both."

Stapleton could not resist this appeal, and, having obtained leave to abandon business for the day, at an early hour started off with Cracker for Woburn Place, manfully walking the whole distance to save omnibus fare—"which will find a week's food for Cracker," he thought, "and a trifle over. Economy's the thing for me."

Elfrida was glad to see him, and was very kind to Cracker, who behaved himself in the most gentlemanly manner, settling down quietly into a corner as soon as he had been patted and fed with a biscuit. Mrs. Caveall happened to be out, but was expected in every minute. Meanwhile Elfrida told Stapleton all she knew about the cause of her change in life.

"I am going to write home to Mr. Brierly," she said. "In fact, I have nearly finished the letter, and I wish you would be kind enough to post it by-and-bye. I will finish it now if you will excuse me."

Of course he would excuse her, and while she added a few more lines he watched her with eager eyes, occasionally heaving a sigh scarce half-suppressed. He had not by any means got over the love he in his blundering way had told her of, if ever he would get over it at all; and she had never before been so charming to him. Sadness lent an additional charm to her beautiful face, and a plain, neat dress set off her slim, youthful figure in a way the most costly of robes, fresh from the hand of that great king of dress-makers, Worth, certainly could not have done.

She had just finished when Mrs. Caveall returned, and, overjoyed to see her son, embraced him with the warmth of a mother's affection. Of all things on earth a mother's love is a thing that never fades but with life. It may falter and grow weak under extraordinary circumstances, although it seldom does even that. But it never utterly leaves a mother's heart.

The letter was given to Stapleton, and he put it into his pocket without any remark being made by his mother, although she repressed a frown as Elfrida bade him post it as he went home. After this they had some tea, and Stapleton, in the course of conversation, asked if he could in any way be of service.

"In many ways," his mother hastened to say. "In the first place you must come here every day while we stay to break our loneliness, and I've no doubt we shall find a lot of little commissions for you. Miss Brierly is fond of flowers, and Covent Garden is on the road here."

"Indeed," said Elfrida, "I hope it will not be thought of. Flowers cost money in Covent

Garden, and I cannot afford to pay. As for Mr. Caveall thinking of spending money he so well and dearly earns, it would be the very acme of selfishness on my part to allow him to do so."

"I should be most happy," murmured Stapleton, who would have given her everything he possessed—for had he not even contemplated giving his one great friend, Cracker, to her?

"No doubt," said Elfrida. "But it would make me miserable to accept them. I have been too selfish and thoughtless all my life, and it is time I had a little thought for others."

"But I may come every day—at least, every evening, I hope?" pleaded Stapleton. "I can't come very early, as I must stick to work. But it would be very kind of you to let me run over when the offices close?"

"Of course you may come," said Elfrida, "but I hope to be away from here in a day or two."

He would have liked her to stay a month, a year, or for good, and how gladly he would have come over every night, wet or dry, hail, rain, blow or snow—it was so delightful to be near her again; but he did not say so. He felt it would be foolish to show his devotion so openly ever again. About eight o'clock he rose to go, and took leave of Elfrida. His mother said she would accompany him to the door.

When they got into the hall she suddenly said:

"You have a letter in your pocket—who is it for?"

"Mr. Brierly."

"Let me see it."

Unsuspecting, he took it out and gave it to her. She immediately tore it into a dozen pieces.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, "what are you doing?"

"I have written to Mr. Brierly myself," she said, "and I cannot have my plans interfered with."

"But tearing up a letter in that way is an unpardonable social outrage," he replied, "and, what's more, it is a crime."

"Oh! Stapleton," said the wretched woman, with a hand upon her heart, "cannot you see that I do all this for you? Will you always be blind to my love and to your own interest? Why not press your suit? Elfrida is sad and wants friends. She acknowledges you as one, and with a little energy you may recover yourself now."

"I tell you not to hope for it," he said, impatiently. "It is a foolish dream of yours, and were I to do as you tell me I should lose even her friendship. You have done a horrible thing in tearing up that letter, and I don't know what to say or do."

"Say and do nothing, Stapleton, but leave all to me," was her answer.

"Good-night, mother," he said, and, having kissed her, went out despairing.

It was a sad fix for him to be in—for what could he do? If he held his peace he would be wronging Elfrida, and if he told of what had been done he would expose his mother and assuredly deprive her of a post that was of great pecuniary advantage to her. He could certainly write to Jacob Brierly—but what was he to say? It would, in either case, tend to the same end—a revelation of the great outrage his mother had been guilty of.

It gave him a restless night, and, in the morning, feverish and disturbed, he set out for his place of business, and on the way unexpectedly met Malcolm Gordon. They had met before, occasionally, their business lying much in the same direction—both had a great deal to do with the docks—but had only bowed as casual acquaintances do. Now Stapleton Caveall stopped to speak, for it occurred to him that Malcolm Gordon, who he knew was a sterling man, could help him out of his difficulties.

"I hope you won't think me troublesome, Mr. Gordon," he said, "but I want you to help me in a little private matter."

Malcolm Gordon had formed his estimate of

Stapleton down at Easterley, and had not seen any occasion to change it, not hearing anything more of him than that he had secured a situation of some sort through the influence of Jacob Brierly. Anticipating a request of a pecuniary nature, he bowed in a way that might mean:

"I shall be pleased to oblige you," or, "I would rather not be troubled if it is all the same to you," or anything else.

Poor Stapleton had been considerably brightened up in London, and he understood that bow perfectly.

It humiliated him a little, and with a lump in his throat he said:

"It's nothing for myself—it concerns Miss Brierly. She and my mother have left Mrs. Wraxall and they are in apartments in Woburn Place. Something has gone wrong with the supposed engagement of Miss Brierly to Lord Debenly, and other things are wrong too. I want to confide in you if you don't mind."

"Can you walk a little way with me?" said Malcolm, interested deeply. "I have an appointment at half-past nine, and must not neglect it."

"And I am not due at the docks until ten," said Stapleton, as he faced about.

They walked on together, and Stapleton told what had happened the previous night.

"Now you see what a horrible affair it is," he said, in conclusion. "What am I to do?"

"You can do nothing," replied Malcolm, "and I will help you if I can. I fancy Lord Debenly had a second thought about the match, for reasons that I am acquainted with. I will write to Jacob Brierly myself, and put things as straight as I can."

"You are a good fellow," said Stapleton, as he wrung his hand at parting, "and I like you very much, although you are one of them who shut out my chance with Miss Brierly. Not that I really ever had one. It was all a dream of my poor mother's—who is too fond of her worthless son."

Considerably lightened in his heart he went off to the docks, and showed a briskness in business that was marvellous in the eyes of people who knew him.

Sorrow and care have both an office to fulfil. After their visit we are all the better for their coming. A departed grief leaves us with a more tender heart, and a lifted care has its place taken by valuable experience.

The eve of the second day came, and Elfrida had received no news from Easterley. Jacob Brierly had not written to her, and she was getting anxious.

Mrs. Caveall buoyed her up with the assurance that he was busy and would write soon. But there were other cares upon them both. The tradesmen who had given Elfrida credit had found her out and were pressing their demands. They now knew as much as society did, and saw no reason for a continuation of the suavity—not to say servility—they had shown her in the hour of her triumph.

The dressmaker was particularly importunate, and sent a porter with his bill and instructions to wait for the money.

Elfrida had not a tenth of the sum required in cash, and Mrs. Caveall declared she had not a penny. As a matter of fact she was expecting a cheque for her last quarter's allowance from Jacob Brierly—a fact she dwelt upon with more than needful emphasis.

"I could sell these jewels," said Elfrida, miserably, "and settle this bill, but nearly all I have here are not paid for, and it would not be honest to part with them."

The people in the house—soon found out that something was wrong, and the landlady came up for an explanation. She was obliged to be particular, she said, as her lodgings were her living, and when her lodgings lost their character where would her living be?

Elfrida asked her what she wanted—and a month's payment of rent in advance was considered to be sufficient to keep up the respectability of the place. Elfrida had enough for that, and paid her.

What a sudden and terrible fall it was! But

one short week, nay, less than a week ago, Elfrida was on a pinnacle—now she was, in a metaphorical sense, in the dust. But empires and nations have fallen in the time. Empresses or kings, at the beginning of the week, have been in the pride of their greatness, and ere the week was out have become fugitives and exiles.

Peoples and communities, like individuals, are subject to sudden changes of thought. What they admire and revere to-day may be despised and spurned on the morrow.

Great was the joy of Elfrida then in the evening when a ring at the bell aroused her from a painful reverie, and looking out she saw Jacob Brierly giving some instructions to a cabman. Never had the sight of her generous-guardian been so welcome, and when he came upstairs he was met upon the landing and checked by two arms put round his neck.

He had not expected this display, and it was very agreeable to him, for more reasons than one, and he warmly returned her salute.

"It is so very kind of you," she said, "to come yourself instead of writing."

"I could not trust myself to that," he said, "the change is too terrible. But why are you living here?"

"I explained all that in my letter," replied Elfrida.

"Your letter! I have received none from you for a fortnight. The only person I have heard from is Malcolm Gordon. He sent me your address and told me I had better come in person to break the sad news to you."

"Break the sad news!" echoed Elfrida.

"Yes, my dear child. The house of Brierly is down, and I am a ruined man. I may be quite penniless, and it is doubtful if I have a right to the clothes I wear."

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW THE FALL CAME.

Life's earliest sweets are wasted,
And time impatient flies;
The flowers of youth are blasted,
Their lingering beauty dies.

THEY went in and sat down—Elfrida in a maze.

She looked at the face of Jacob Brierly and saw that it was concerned and sad—it had always been a little so, but now the lines were deepened and he had suddenly grown terribly old.

"It is unnecessary, Elfrida, to give you the details," he said. "I dare hardly look at them myself. A change in trade, a little bad speculation, and a break-up at the bank have done it all."

He might have added that her extravagance had helped a little towards the end, but he was too generous to do so.

She was not spared, however, for her conscience pricked her with the memory of her selfishness.

"I believe I am the cause of it all," she said, with a moan of despair.

"You must not say so," he replied, caressing her; "believe me, my dear child, the little you have spent was but a drop in the bucketful that has gone. I've taken to dreaming in these latter days and have been heedless of the rising storm. My father would have seen it coming and saved himself. My eyes were shut to what was advancing, and the clouds have broken suddenly and heavily upon me. I have given up everything and can do no more. They have behaved well to me and talk of making an allowance, but I shall not take it, unless it is for your sake."

"What shall we do?" asked Elfrida, bending over him in her anguish and stroking his wan face.

"I think of living here in London," he replied. "I daresay I shall get something to do, for, after all, I am a business man and know the ways of trade. Perhaps somebody will give me a stool in a counting-house. But what will become of you?"

"Oh! I will work too," said Elfrida, assuming cheerfulness. "I am young and have a pair of hands that ought to do something."

"There is Mrs. Caveall," said Jacob Brierly, wearily. "I owe her a cheque I cannot give her, but she has taken a considerable sum of me, and will not press me for a while. I may be able to pay her soon."

But Elfrida was not so sure of Mrs. Caveall, although she did not say so, and when that lady came in shortly after her fears were confirmed.

Mrs. Caveall took the news very ill, and forgot both her good breeding and dignity as she railed at the fallen Jacob Brierly.

She put herself forward as a confiding widow who had been deluded and deceived and wronged of her rights—one would have thought it was her fortune that had been lost, or that she had never received a kindness from the patient, broken man.

She was in the midst of a tirade against dishonest tradesmen, which Jacob bore wearily and Elfrida listened to with quiet contempt, when Stapleton Caveall, with his faithful Cracker at his heels, came into the room.

The young fellow was much surprised to hear the tone of his mother's voice, and asked her what was the matter.

"This man," she said, pointing to Jacob Brierly, "is an impostor. He has not a penny in the world and cannot pay me my last quarter's money."

Stapleton turned a pained, inquiring face upon Jacob Brierly, who said:

"Yes, it is quite true—I am ruined, I have lost all."

"And I am deeply sorry for it," said Stapleton, earnestly, "for you have been kind to us, and I only wish I could help you."

"Stapleton!" cried Mrs. Caveall, "do not forget that he has not paid me."

"I cannot forget, mother, that Mr. Brierly allowed me to make his house my home when I was nothing better than an intruder—that to him I owe my present position."

"Your position, Stapleton?"

"A position I am proud of, mother, for I earn my bread and pay for it. I am sorry you have forgotten yourself a little; but I know it is only your haste. In an hour you will be sorry for it, and then we can talk over—"

"Stapleton, I won't talk over anything if it concerns these people," cried Mrs. Caveall, "nor will I stop here another moment when I am paid was is due to me."

"Mother, for shame."

"This is not the first time you have turned against me, although I am glad, Stapleton, that you disobeyed me before, or you might now be the husband of that penniless girl and—"

"Mother, I cannot allow you to go on in this way," interrupted Stapleton, with a flushed face; "it is unjust to everybody and particularly to yourself. You must not mind what she says, Miss Brierly, for she is hasty."

But here Mrs. Cundleton Caveall broke in with a violent scream, and began to exhibit strong hysterical symptoms, which, however, soon terminated in another burst of passion, in which Jacob Brierly, Elfrida, and Stapleton were all roundly abused, and having exhausted her power of speech she flounced out of the room and was seen no more.

"You must not think she means it," said Stapleton, hanging his head, "when she gets excited she doesn't know what she is saying."

"I am only sorry that I am the cause of it all," said Jacob Brierly, "and we will say no more about it at present. I will pay her one day, if I live. You know London pretty well?"

"Yes; both ends I may say now."

"Then, perhaps, you can tell me where I can get a cheap lodging?"

"You won't get anything up west that is respectable, but if you like to come my way there are plenty of places. Indeed, if you don't mind living so near me," here Stapleton hesitated a little, "you can have rooms in the same house as myself. The terms are reasonable and the people are clean as well as civil."

"Can we do better?" asked Jacob Brierly, looking at Elfrida.

"No," she said, and Stapleton's delight was unbounded.

He was tasting the sweets of being of some service to one who had rendered him a great kindness, in addition to having the prospect offered him of seeing much of the woman he was foolishly and hopelessly in love with.

There was no obstacle to their going at once. The landlady had not the least objection to their departure, having a month's rent in advance, which she clung to as some compensation for having unsuspectingly taken in people who were "in difficulties." Abatement under the circumstances could not possibly be thought of. She wondered, she really did, at the young lady suggesting it. Elfrida had no heart to press a reasonable demand, and Stapleton Caveall, rashly championing her cause, was speedily worsted and put to confusion.

"There is one thing I should like to do," said Elfrida to Jacob Brierly, as they were packing up.

"What is that, darling?"

"Send these jewels back to the jeweller. They are not paid for."

"Quite right, Elfrida. They shall go at once."

"My dresses have been worn and would not fetch much. But I think I had better sell them. The dressmaker would not take them back."

"No, keep them," said he, "you will find the materials useful perhaps in making up something plainer. I will pay the dressmaker one day."

She looked at him with his stooping shoulders and grey head and saw it was never to be. He might drag on, and in some way make bare bread, but to clear off great burdens he had not the strength. The fires of youth were out, the strength of manhood was decaying fast. He had only good resolves to help him, and they would not do much of the work that was needed without strong hands.

Still they were something. They buoyed him up and he was quite cheerful on the way to Smith's Villas—that plebeian place of residence which had so disgusted Mrs. Wrexall. But the bustle of the streets soon confused him.

"London is busier than it used to be," he said, "it must be so. I saw it once or twice for a day or two when I was younger, and then it certainly was quieter—oh, yes! much quieter."

"The streets are undoubtedly busier," said Stapleton, "they change, as we do, as time rolls on."

"Ah! we do," replied Jacob Brierly, with a sigh, and was silent for the rest of the way.

It was almost dark when they reached their destination, and they were spared a public reception the host of children thereabout would have given them if they had arrived in the daytime.

(To be Continued.)

FACETIÆ.

AN ELASTIC BAND.—The Mastodon Minstrels.

—Punch.

"AND THIS IS FAME!"

HOUSE OF COMMONS OFFICIAL (to stranger who is returning to his seat in the gallery): "Name, sir?"

STRANGER (editor of the "Mudborough Gazette," and author of many justly celebrated works): "Name? Ahem! Braggot—J. B. Braggot."

JADED OFFICIAL: "Tut-tut-tut! Not the slightest use mentioning your own name, sir. I want the name of the member who introduced you."

J. B. B. (disgusted): "Oh! Tomkins!" [Returns wrathfully to his seat, and determines to write a scathing article in next number.] —Punch.

HOUSE OF LORDS' AXIOM.—Prepossession is nine points of the law. —Punch.

TO MESSES. DILLON AND CO.

THE seed that mischievous agitators scatter broadcast in Ireland—sedition. —Punch.

DINER (sniffing): "Waiter, I really think this fish is not fresh."

WAITER: "Yessir, 'can't answer for that, sir, I've honly been 'ere a week, sir!" —Punch.

THE NEW OURANG.

(As described by Mr. Frank Buckland.)

'TWIXT four and five feet high he is,

If not a little bigger;

It seems he has a baby "phiz,"

Although a massive figger.

His hair is what you may call red—

'Twill larger be a year hence—

He gains, by baldness on his head,

"Professional appearance."

He puts his arm forth from his cage,

In fashion most unruly,

And screams and yells when in a rage—

A pleasant creature truly! —Punch.

A BIT FROM THE GREEN ISLE.

(Scene—An Irish village after a storm.)

PARSON (to Pat returning from work): "Well, Pat, you look very wet."

PAT (unbuttoning his coat): "Bedad, an' it's nearly throwntid of am."

PARSON: "But what are you taking your coat off for?"

PAT: "Faith, an' oim toorning it insoide oot, sure an' it's throy insoide." —Moonshine.

THERE'S nothing so flooring to the man who is a deal board as the in-come tacks. An (n)ailing man can't stand that sort of thing.

—Moonshine.

A FACETIOUS timber-merchant, not far from Hawarden, advertises the trees the Premier felled as "Gladstone's trunks." Artful fellow, he knows it is the holiday season.

—Moonshine.

BLOODLESS WARFARE.—Cutting down expenses.

—Moonshine.

OUR gardener says that the passion flour is a capital thing to make hasty pudding with.

—Moonshine.

A BLACK DRAUGHT.—Native regiments ordered to the front.

—Moonshine.

THE CONCERT OF EUROPE.—Gladstone on the High C.

—Moonshine.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

O'FINNIGAN: "Look at that now, Brown! The Irishman will have his roights, thin, for he's got the heart, the lungs, and the brickbats, bedad."

BROWN: "Mark my words, O'Finnigan, these riots and murders will ruin business in your country."

O'FINNIGAN: "Be Jabers, an' a good job too. I hate business; and show me the roight-minded throe-hearted Irishman that doesn't."

—Fun.

"ONE TOUCH OF NATURE," ETC.

STREET PREACHER: "I now ask, brethren, what can I do to move you—what shall I do to move you in this world of wickedness?"

'ARRY: "Send round the 'at, guv'nor, that'll move 'em." —Fun.

A HARD CASE.

MAJOR DUNNUP: "Awfully dull down here, isn't it, Miss Maria?"

MISS MARIA: "Do you think so? Why don't you go, then? You're a bachelor, and have only yourself to please."

MAJOR DUNNUP: "Only myself to please! You don't know what a doosid difficult thing that is to do." —Fun.

"CAPTAIN HOBSON'S LITTLE PET."

THE orang-outang at the Aquarium says that though he should much prefer being in the woods at Malacca, he intends remaining in Westminster at present, and making the best of his oranges and lemons. The reason he stays in the Aquarium, "The Old Man of the Woods" states, is because it is Hobson's choice.

—Fun.

PHONETIC.

MAIDEN AUNT TO TALL YOUNG MAN: "As I stood by you in church, Percy, I could not help being struck by your size."

PERCY: "Very sorry, aunt, but there was such an awfully pretty girl the other side of the aisle, I couldn't help sighing." —Fun.

A "KNOCK"—ULAR DEMONSTRATION.

OVER twenty thousand pilgrims have visited Knock, the scene of the recent miraculous appearances. This must be profitable at least to the worthy Knockers, or inhabitants, with whom (to speak theatrically) the "ghost must walk" pretty considerably. Of course the phantoms mostly appear at night, being, as usual, Knock-turnal apparitions. But whether it is worth while travelling hundreds of miles on the chance of seeing this strange spectre-cle is a matter of taste. As Aunt T. would say, "De ghostibus non est disputandum."

Funny Folks.

TAKING A LIBERTY.—Getting out of prison.

—Funny Folks.

QUERY.

WHY is a note of interrogation like the ghost in "Hamlet"?—Because it "comes in such a question-able shape." —Funny Folks.

EPITAPH FOR A PHYSICIAN.—"After life's fitful fee-ver he sleeps well. —Funny Folks.

GOOD NAME FOR A FEMALE CREMATIONIST.—Cinder-ella. —Funny Folks.

A SEASIDE SONNET.

(After Milton—Oysters.)

BY A SOCIETY SONNETEER.

How jaunty the jelly-fish frolic and roar,

How wildly the winkles express their de-

light,

Though Robinson Crusoe would frown in

affright

On the footprints, by ocean all foamfizzled

o'er,

Of an amber-shod maiden who looks to the

Nore,

And heeds not her havoc—for, heaving in

sight,

Is a barque, and on board her beloved—

but "tight"

As never was British beloved before!

Alas, for that maiden awaiting her mate—

She knew not the ways of the sons of the

wave,

When she bade him go ride at a rollicking

rate

O'er the billow that bounds; and she

knows not her brave

Hath struggled with "swipes" and sea-

sickness and fate,

Till gone with his "grab" is the joy that

she gave.

Margate, 1880.

—Judy.

PEOPLE WE OFTEN HEAR OF BUT VERY SELDOM

SEE.

THE charwoman who does not suffer from some internal complaint (requiring alcoholic remedies), carry a large inside pocket, and who cannot give you the private history of all your neighbours.

The man who does not consider that the good looks of "professional beauties" are very much over-estimated.

The woman who can run after an omnibus gracefully, endeavouring at the same time to attract the conductor's attention.

The man who cannot steer a steam launch.

—Judy.

INDIA SHAWLS.

AN India shawl, like a wonderful painting, possesses beauty untold to a cultivated eye. More wonderful still is this beauty when we think of the long, weary hours occupied in making it, and the many stitches inserted slowly and carefully by different hands. The odd-looking leaf you admire in one corner, and

the gay-coloured one in another, exemplify the old story of "extremes meeting;" for the possibility is that they were made fifty miles apart, and then wedded together by the calculating merchant. It is a little curious to think that in this manufacture the maker does not know his pattern, even if he makes the entire shawl; for he makes by written directions, and on the wrong side, using a needle very much like a match sharpened at both ends.

To make a handsome shawl requires one year's steady work, and one is insensibly reminded of life's own story—the threads going in and out for so long a time with no knowledge what the result will be. "The Vale of Cashmere" to-day furnishes in one way as many beauties as it did when Moore sang of it; and if Lalla Rookh does not wear the soft, clinging drapery, English and American beauties do. Orientalism being sought for in all its phases just now, "La Mode" decrees that shawls shall be worn more largely than ever before, and suggests a graceful method—for it is hard to wear a shawl gracefully—that will look well on all; it is, of course the dolman. With little trouble an India shawl may be transformed into one, the dull green or chilly-looking blue that forms the centre of the shawl being caught up in wrinkles by an Oriental silk piquet to assume the shape of a hood. Some ladies have their shawls cut into coats, which are elegant and stylish-looking, but one finds, upon examination, that no woman is barbaric enough to cut a "real" India shawl. Shawls used for this purpose are generally imitations of the India, the Decca, and the Valley Cashmere.

An exquisite work of art is a Delhi shawl, which, after having all the richest of Oriental colourings bestowed upon it, is further graced by threads of gold, that show their presence by gleaming and glistening at each movement of the wearer. A Cashmere variety, made in France, is in black, cream and cocher, with soft, clinging-looking fringe to match, and will be extensively used at the seaside in combination with bright dresses that need something neutral to tone them down.

BRIDGED BY HIS LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl."

"Poor Loo," "Bound to the Trawl,"

"Fringed with Fire," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

DRIFTING.

The moon is at her full, and, riding high,
Floods sea and land with light;
The airs that hover on the summer sky
Are all asleep to-night.

"Mr dear Rosalind, a little judicious flirtation is all very well, but don't you think you are carrying it a trifle too far?"

The speaker was Lady Mabel Marmion.

Time about 11 p.m., and scene the ladies' private drawing-room in the hotel at Scarborough.

"I don't understand you, aunt," was the surprised reply; "I am quite unconscious of flirting."

"Indeed, my dear, then allow me to tell you that you are the only unconscious person in the whole play."

"What do you mean, Aunt Mabel?" demanded our heroine, a trifle indignantly.

"I mean that it is all very well to flirt with Sir Christopher Drake, but you must marry Lord Oaklands."

Rosalind's eyes flashed.

The word "must" was more than her proud spirit could tamely brook, and she said, warmly:

"I shall marry no man whom I do not love, and I can scarcely tolerate Lord Oaklands."

Lady Mabel also lost her temper at this juncture, and she said, angrily:

"I suppose then you mean to marry that ploughboy, after all?"

"I don't know a ploughboy," replied Rosalind, with dignity, "and if you persist in using such an epithet in connection with Mr. Harcourt I shall decline to talk with you."

"Very well, then we will call him the embryo M.P., the future Prime Minister, anything you like, but it will save me a great deal of unnecessary trouble and vexation if you will tell me definitely and frankly at once if you have made up your mind to marry this very interesting young man."

Her ladyship spoke in a sneering tone, but she was very much in earnest, and she looked a vixen even while she smiled as she added before Rosalind could reply:

"Only count the cost of your decision, my dear, and remember that you will hold a very different position as Mr. Harcourt's wife to that which you now occupy."

"It is not that—or, at least, that is not all," replied the girl, doubtfully, "but I have no intention of marrying anyone in particular at present, and I quite detest the subject, aunt. As for saying, however, that I must marry Lord Oaklands, there is no one to compel me to marry him, and I think it highly improbable that I shall ever do anything of the kind."

"You grow more like your mother every day of your life," exclaimed Lady Mabel, again losing her temper, "she was as self-willed and obstinate as a mule."

"You pay me a great compliment, aunt," smiled Rosalind, "I could desire nothing more than to be like my mother."

"Can't you? Then I don't admire your taste. She might have married a marquis, and she waited years to become the wife of a pauper."

"As the little money I possess comes from my father's family, I think your remark is in anything but good taste, aunt," replied Rosalind, with dignity, "but let us put an end to this unpleasant discussion. If you wish it I will ask Mr. and Mrs. Vane to let me go and live with them, or I will find a home somewhere without troubling you, but I will not have the question of marriage so persistently pressed upon me. I wonder you don't get married yourself, aunt, you are so constantly urging its necessity upon me."

Lady Mabel frowned.

Rosalind knew not how many efforts her widowed aunt had made to win a rich husband, or how she was even now trying to land a heavy fish for herself, while she seemed only interested in the matrimonial advancement of her niece.

She was particularly secret, however, about her own affairs and she replied, severely:

"Your levity is most ill-timed, but we will change the subject; after all it is only you who will benefit by my efforts for your welfare or suffer by your own waywardness. I suppose you were not disappointed at my declining tickets for the dance to-night."

"Not in the least; I was very glad of it," replied Rosalind. "How long do you propose staying in Scarborough, aunt?"

"I don't quite know, a fortnight or three weeks. By the way, I have promised that we will ride to-morrow with Lord Bracknell and Oaklands."

"We have no horses," objected Rosalind.

"Well, they have," was the impatient retort; "really, Rosalind, you are as tiresome as your Aunt Caroline."

Whereupon the girl took up a book and relapsed into silence.

Lady Mabel had a way of startling not only Lady Killbrook but everybody else by the calm way in which she laid the property of her male friends under contribution for anything she might choose to fancy.

Flowers or tickets for shows and entertainments might be accepted by a lady without loss of dignity, but the use of carriages and horses, and country houses, to say nothing of the costly articles which Lady Mabel half asked for and then accepted as presents, surprised and rather annoyed her more scrupulous relations.

The next morning a message was brought to Lady Mabel with Lord Bracknell's compliments and a request to know what time it would suit her for the horses to be brought round.

"Then it is Lord Bracknell's horses we are going to ride?" asked Rosalind, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes," replied her aunt, indifferently.

But the girl felt relieved in mind.

Lord Bracknell was married, and he was, moreover, quite old enough to be her father, and these two circumstances taken together made her feel a certain amount of safety in his society which she did not experience when surrounded with younger men.

The ride was a very pleasant one.

Lord Bracknell attached himself to Rosalind's side, much to the annoyance of Lord Oaklands; but his feeling of vexation was greatly increased when Sir Christopher Drake, likewise on horseback, joined the party.

Instinct told this young man that Lady Mabel did not approve of him, and, being assured on this point, he made no effort to gain her good opinion but devoted himself exclusively to the agreeable task of winning the favour of her niece.

A kind of free lance was Sir Christopher Drake, a soldier of fortune, of whom Lady Mabel by no means approved.

But she did not at present see her way to getting rid of him.

Lord Oaklands had another reason for being ill at ease, he was conscious that he had been very injudicious the previous night.

After the yachting expedition he had dined more freely than he could have ventured to do in the presence of ladies, and at this bachelor entertainment the wine flowed liberally, and Oaklands was one of those men whose tongue wine never failed to unloosen.

Wine made him boastful, quarrelsome, and confidential, and in his cups he had told the story which Rosalind had so carefully guarded.

This revelation startled his listeners, amongst whom was Sir Christopher Drake.

A girl who could refuse or at any rate keep dangling after her a man who would one day be a marquis must for herself be worth cultivating, and Lord Oaklands made himself more dangerous rivals on that occasion than Rosalind's bright eyes alone could have done in double the time.

In the rear of our party of equestrians, and in attendance upon his master, was Ned Milstead.

Fortunately for Rosalind's comfort she had not noticed the man.

But he always kept a close watch upon her, and was waiting only for an opportunity to safely address her.

The morning's ride passed over, however, without this chance occurring.

That same day Lady Mabel informed the manager of the hotel that she and her niece would dine at the table d'hôte if a small table could be set aside for herself and friends.

To which the obsequious and intelligent caterer replied that the matter should be arranged as she desired, and he, having an eye to beauty and also to effect, ordered a large square table, capable of accommodating eight persons, but only laid for six, to be placed in the deep bay window which faced the door, and was in the middle of the long dining-hall.

"So that everybody can see her," remarked that sagacious man of business to one of his subordinates, and then he managed to get it whispered about in many directions, not only inside the hotel but out of it, that Miss Rosalind Redesdale, the celebrated beauty, intended to dine in the public dining-saloon that day.

In consequence of this advertisement the great hall was crowded, and Lady Mabel had the satisfaction of feeling that by virtue of her niece's beauty she was herself for the time being the fashion.

She was gracious in her triumph, as indeed she had a habit of being with her equals, and when Mrs. and Miss Belford came into the room and were making their way to their accustomed seats she smiled amiably and sug-

gested that there was plenty of room at her table if they would prefer sitting there.

Mrs. Bellford declined the invitation, but her daughter readily accepted it, as Lady Mabel had expected she would do.

That shrewd young lady had an eye to the main chance and would be very well satisfied to take some of the good things which Rosalind passed indifferently by.

She was a contrast to our heroine, and, as Lady Mabel sagaciously reflected, she was not only a foil but a useful companion, and her presence served to show that Rosalind need not fear the rivalry of even an acknowledged beauty.

Like bees about honey, men hovered near this square table with its brilliant flowers and tastefully arranged fruit, looking longingly at the vacant seats yet not daring to take them, until Lord Oaklands and Sir Christopher Drake strolled into the room at the same moment and at once made for Miss Redesdale's side.

So eager were they that they almost forgot their good breeding, and Rosalind felt so much annoyed at their undisguised rivalry that she looked up, smiled tantalisingly at Sir Christopher, who had been the first to get his hand on the back of the chair, and said:

"I am keeping this seat for Lord Bracknell."

The young man looked vexed, but Lady Mabel hastened to the rescue by saying:

"There is plenty of room here, Sir Christopher."

And he had taken his seat before Lord Bracknell made his appearance.

It was a very pleasant dinner.

Outside the open window a good band was playing operatic music.

Inside the room the gleam of lamps, the bright hues and delicious perfume of flowers, aided by choice fruits, coloured glass, the glitter of silver, and all the accessories to a well-served table, made the scene brilliant in the extreme; while the ladies' toilettes, the delicate viands, and the choice vintages made the dinner one to be remembered even by men who fared sumptuously every day.

Rosalind ate but little.

She was amused in watching the people at the long tables, quite unconscious that she herself was the great object of attraction.

Lord Oaklands was a trifle sulky, though Edith Bellford used all her arts to charm him; but Sir Christopher Drake never allowed any trifle to ruffle his temper, and he was now chatting gaily with Lady Mabel and Rosalind by turns.

"I wish I could persuade you ladies to come to Scotland next month," he was saying to Lady Mabel.

"We are going," was the reply.

"Oh! then do come and pay me a visit. My sister, Mrs. Carew, will be at Carloch with her husband, and she will be delighted to entertain you."

"Is Carloch your place or your sister's?" here asked Miss Bellford, bluntly.

"Mine," was the reply.

Whereupon the young lady collapsed.

She had meant to be sharp and had only succeeded in being rude; moreover she had spoken with a view of extorting an invitation to Scotland for herself and her mother, because she noticed that they had been carefully ignored by the baronet, and her well-meant effort had failed.

So she devoted herself with more eagerness and assiduity than ever to Lord Oaklands.

But the future marquis was not in an appreciative mood; to his great annoyance he was hourly falling more and more deeply in love with Rosalind, and there was not the least sign on her part that she reciprocated his attachment.

At one moment he felt inclined to go away—out the whole affair, and start east, west, north, or south; anywhere so that he placed the sea and a few hundreds of miles between himself and those who directly or indirectly, with malice aforethought, or unconsciously, caused him so much discomfort.

Had he believed that he would have vexed

Rosalind herself by taking this course he would have started at once, but he had an uneasy conviction that his absence would be rather a relief than a punishment to her, and, therefore, he would not go.

Lady Mabel, however, had tact enough to prevent Miss Bellford from flirting too desperately or Rosalind from being too reserved, and she marshalled her forces with admirable skill until the moment arrived when the ladies rose from table.

"I think you had better come to our rooms for coffee," remarked Lady Mabel, and the three gentlemen readily accepted the invitation.

But on their way upstairs Edith Bellford said to Rosalind:

"Wouldn't you like a stroll on the balcony of the drawing-room before the men leave their wine and their cigars?"

"Yes, very much," was the reply.

So Lady Mabel was left to talk with Edith's mother, who had joined them when they rose from the table, while the two girls went out upon the stone gallery, which commanded an extensive view of the promenade, the shore, and the sea.

"I like to watch the lights on the water," said Edith, leaning against the side of an opened window.

"So do I," replied Rosalind, "and how cool and fresh it is here—I much prefer this place to the heated rooms."

"Yes, it is all very well for a time, but you mean to go to the ball to-night, don't you?"

"No, I think not. I had so much dancing in London that I am a little tired of it. I would much rather go for a walk on the sands."

"Yes, I dare say you would, particularly if that handsome fellow, Lord Oaklands, were with you tête-à-tête."

"No, that would be no inducement. I would much rather go for a walk with you alone, but I suppose we cannot manage it."

"Not to-night; but I'll go in the morning with pleasure. I always like a run on the sands before breakfast. Shall I send my maid to call you?"

"Yes, I wish you would."

"I suppose it is true what I have heard about you and Lord Oaklands?" remarked Edith Bellford, who, for reasons of her own, wished to know the exact condition of affairs.

"I don't know what you have heard. Yes, aunt, I am coming."

This last to Lady Mabel, who opportunely put her head out of the window and called her niece.

"Rosalind, do you mean to dance or sing to-night?"

"Neither that I am aware of," responded the girl, smiling.

"But we have decided that you are to do one or the other—either go to the ball or give us some music."

"Then pray let us have music at home," here interposed Miss Bellford. "One gets such a mixed lot at those balls."

A remark that surprised Rosalind not a little, though she at once acquiesced without any comment.

Miss Edith was showing her cards rather too openly.

"She wants to marry Lord Oaklands. Should I mind I wonder?" mused Rosalind, an hour or two later when she found herself for a few seconds looking out upon the starlit sea alone.

The question was not as easily answered as the fair questioner herself could have wished. It had, in some way or other, become a settled matter in her mind that she should marry either Harry Harcourt or Lord Oaklands, and, as yet, she was uncertain as to which it would be.

Of course she liked Harry best, but if she married him she would offend her family, cut herself off from the world of which she had become a part, and would most probably materially injure instead of improve his prospects in life.

All this had to be considered, and she felt

that the only safe course open to her was to wait.

Consequently, if less painful to her feelings it was almost as unsatisfactory to see Edith Bellford setting her cap at Lord Oaklands as it had been to observe Lady Hilda Staines monopolising the attentions of Harry Harcourt.

"Why cannot they all wait?" was her impatient thought as she saw Lord Oaklands turning over Miss Bellford's music and then furtively glancing at herself.

She forgot that time and opportunity wait for no man.

That night, however, when their friends had betaken themselves to their own rooms, and Lady Mabel and her niece had likewise retired to their respective apartments, Rosalind was not a little surprised to find a note upon her toilette table addressed in a copper-plate style of handwriting to:

"Miss Rosie Redesdale."

"Whom can it be from?" was her first natural exclamation; "surely if Mr. Vane is in Scarborough he would have come to me and not have written like this."

Then she tore open the scented envelope and read:

"DEAR MISS ROSIE,—I've loved you ever since Harry Harcourt and me fought for you at South Hall—nigh on seven years ago. You're more beautiful than the day, more graceful than any filly that ever was foaled. I've watched you this evening in the gay and giddy throng, with your eyes brighter than the ruby wine you lifted to your lips, and, in the words of the poet, I said:

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine.
And leave a kiss within the cup,
And I'll not ask for wine.

"Your own devoted and patient Ned."

"The man is mad," thought Rosalind, as she angrily tore into fragments this disjointed and chaotic effusion; "but it is a form of madness that may become exceedingly unpleasant."

Then she began to wish that her cousin or uncle were near at hand so that through them she might effectually put an end to Ned Milstead's impudence.

But the fellow had been cunning enough to wait until she was comparatively unprotected.

True, she might tell Lord Oaklands about the letter, and also explain what she knew of his groom in earlier days, and no doubt the young nobleman would dismiss the man, and very probably give him a sound thrashing.

This, however, would not help her, while it would place her to a certain extent under an obligation to Lord Oaklands.

A condition of affairs that was by no means desirable, and that could lead to nothing but misunderstanding and increased discomfort.

And so, through the long hours of that silent night, Rosalind tossed restlessly and feverishly upon her bed, troubled more by Ned Milstead's amorous effusion than its contents seemed to warrant.

A presage of the trouble that this insignificant groom was destined to bring into her life seemed to be upon her and drove sleep from her eyelids, and when at last she did become unconscious she had hardly been asleep five minutes before Miss Bellford's maid awoke her for the proposed morning walk.

"I won't tell Aunt Mabel about it," was Rosalind's decision with regard to the letter.

A most unwise resolution to come to, as time will show.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A GREAT TEMPTATION.

If little labour, little are our gains;
Man's fortunes are according to his pains.

WHILE Rosalind is spending her time more or less pleasantly at Scarborough, surrounded by a crowd of admirers, Harry Harcourt is in London, working hard and thinking longingly of the green fields and flower-spangled hedges of South Hall farm.

London is hot and sultry, but Parliament is still sitting, for matters of grave importance are on the tapis, and there are ominous rumours of war and of an early dissolution of Parliament. There has been much discussion between Harry and Lord Taxtub.

This statesman has attached himself almost affectionately to our hero, and is intent upon establishing his fortunes.

His lordship is not a rich man, but his power when in office is enormous, and there is little doubt that he will exercise all his influence on the young man's behalf whenever he has an opportunity.

Harry is poring over a pile of papers this hot, scorching afternoon.

The pavement of the yard facing his windows seems to glare as the hot sun burns down upon it, and the air that comes in through the open windows only makes the room hotter and more stifling than it would be if sun and air were both excluded.

But Harry will not allow himself to think of the heat, and he is only aroused from his work by the unannounced entrance of Lord Taxtub himself.

"Ah!" remarked the peer, throwing himself into an easy-chair, "hard at work as usual."

"Yes, those statistics are wanted for to-night," replied the young man, "but something unusual must have happened to bring your lordship east of Temple Bar at this hour of the day."

"Something has happened," was the reply. "Blyndon is dead, and Widdorburgh has, at the present moment, only one member of Parliament. Are you disposed to contest the vacant seat?"

"I don't know," was the doubtful reply. "There are so many things to be said for and against it."

"So there are, so there are," returned Lord Taxtub, deliberately, "many things. You might not care to work as assiduously as my private secretary, but in that case I should have to find you another post, for I can't lose you, Harcourt."

"Thank you, my lord; a seat in Parliament would never compensate me for the loss of your friendship."

"Don't talk of such a thing, but think over whether or not you will contest Widdorburgh. I don't offer you any advice either way. We may have a dissolution before the writ can be returned—or you may do better out of Parliament than in it. But just turn the matter over in your mind, and let me know your decision to-night, will you?"

"Yes, my lord. Would you like my arm back to your house or club?"

"No, you are busy, and my carriage isn't far off. I am going to call on an old college chum in King's Bench Walk, but don't come downstairs. You had better dine with me to-night, if you have no other engagement."

Harry accepted the invitation, and a few seconds later he was alone.

But he could no longer work. Lord Taxtub's visit had unsettled his thoughts by suggesting so many wonderful possibilities to his sanguine mind.

The shortest road to being in a position to propose for Rosie was, without doubt, the attainment of a seat in Parliament. But he did not shut his eyes to two drawbacks connected therewith.

First of all a seat in Parliament does not mean what it used to do in the time of our grandfathers, or even of our fathers, when the representatives of the people were necessarily gentlemen; and, secondly, the cost of a contest is not, and never has been, an unconsidered trifle.

The more he thought of this part of the subject the more convinced he felt of the utter unwisdom of the attempt.

It is true that he had been assured that the political party whose opinions he would be returned to represent would guarantee all his expenses. But this arrangement scarcely suited his feelings of independence.

He had an uncomfortable notion that he would seem to be bought, and would be little more than a puppet, and against this idea his proud spirit at once rebelled.

He had no powerful or wealthy relatives to help him, either with influence or money. To appeal to Squire Vane was out of the question, and even had his worthy step-father volunteered substantial aid for such a purpose he would have declined it.

He was debating these things in his mind, pacing up and down his sitting-room, and trying to see his way clearly to the course he ought to decide upon, when another visitor mounted the worn stairs and was admitted by the youth who acted as clerk, errand boy and porter—this was no other than the Earl of Dacre.

The earl was hot and tired, and very cross.

He had come upon a mission that he detested—had come against his judgment and inclination, and had only consented to come at all after a very stormy scene with his spoilt daughter.

"The man will think I am bribing him to marry you," the proud old peer had exclaimed, passionately, when Lady Hilda first unfolded her scheme and requested her father's co-operation.

"He will do nothing of the kind," she replied, with dignity, "for he knows that no man need be bribed to marry me, and he, at any rate, will not misjudge me. But never mind, papa, I will manage the matter myself, or get a solicitor to negotiate it for me. I am only sorry that I bothered you about it at all, poor dear."

But the "poor dear" objected to this latter plan more strongly still. His daughter would be sure to compromise herself in some mad manner if left to her own devices, particularly when she had some pet project in her mind, and the only way in which he could control her or protect her from her own imprudence was by seeming to be her willing agent.

Many times had poor Lord Dacre had cause to sigh and to wish that Providence had been kind enough to give him a daughter less gifted with brains. He would very much have preferred a pretty fool to the brilliant and headstrong Lady Hilda.

In the present instance, however, he sighed more heavily than usual. Then he said:

"If it must be done, and you are quite resolved to throw away a small fortune, and expose yourself to misapprehension, I suppose I am the only person who can in any way save your dignity and carry out your ridiculous schemes. What am I to do and say?"

"Nothing, papa, dear. You are not in a fit frame of mind to manage such a delicate piece of business. Leave it all to me. I won't go to Mr. Harcourt myself, but I'll send Lord Taxtub, and get him to arrange the matter quietly without mentioning my name."

But this plan was more distasteful to Lord Dacre than either of the others.

If he or his daughter did spend from five to ten thousand pounds on a young man's advancement in life, he would, at least, like to have the young man's gratitude for the same, and he was by no means willing that the credit should be given to anybody else.

Besides, if Lord Dacre himself offered the money requisite for the contest, there was a chance that Harcourt for many reasons would decline it, while, if Lord Taxtub made the proposal as coming from himself or party, the young man would scarcely have the option of refusing.

So after a good deal of grumbling on his lordship's part, and much fretfulness, all of which was met by smiling wilfulness and obstinate determination on the part of his daughter, who knew that he would become pliable at last, he unwillingly consented to go to Harry Harcourt's chambers and make his offer of help.

"Puff, puff! Oh, how hot it is! Whatever makes you live so near the sky, Harcourt?" panted his lordship, as he sank upon the nearest chair thoroughly overcome with the heat.

"The weather is hot. Try some of this claret cup, my lord; it will refresh you."

Then as the old peer complied the younger man added:

"You should have sent for me to come to you."

I would have done so with pleasure, but I thought you had already left town."

"No, we go in a few days. But do you know that Blyndon is dead, and that his seat for Widdorburgh is vacant?"

"Yes. Lord Taxtub has just been here."

"Ah, he has lost no time. Do you mean to become a candidate?"

"I don't know," was the dubious reply. "I was thinking the matter over when you came in, for I have to say 'Yes' or 'No' to-night."

"Ah! And which do you mean to say?"

"I have not yet decided. There are so many things to be considered on both sides."

"Are there? I should have thought there was only one question to be considered in the whole matter, and that is the expense."

"That is an important consideration, of course," replied the young man, slowly. "Everyone knows," he went on, "that I am not a rich man, and I believe my expenses would be paid for me, but I don't care to sell my independence."

"Quite right," replied Lord Dacre, who was by this time recovering from his fatigue. "I have not come to buy your independence," he added, "but I have come to make you an offer of help. Yes, I; or, rather, my daughter, is at the bottom of it, as you may suppose. I care nothing for politics, as you are aware, and I sometimes scarcely know which party is in power, but Hilda is different; she ought to have been a man, politics should never be dabbled in by women."

Then Lord Dacre helped himself to some more claret cup, and Harry, feeling that some remark was expected from him, said:

"I can't agree with you about your daughter, I think ladies should interest themselves in the affairs of the nation, particularly when they thoroughly study the matter as Lady Hilda does."

"Well, that is a matter of opinion, I only wish for my own part that Hilda was not so very clever. Take my advice, Harcourt, and never marry a clever woman, she'll twist you round her finger like a piece of silk if you do."

"I don't think I am in much danger," smiled the young man; "a fellow in my position must make his way in the world before he can indulge in the luxury of marriage."

"Unless he marries to enable him to make his way easier," suggested the earl, suspiciously.

"I don't think I shall be tempted to do that," was the cautious reply.

"I'm glad to hear it," said his lordship, while his face brightened, "and now I can say what I came to say without the fear of being misunderstood."

Harcourt bowed; for again the earl had paused as though waiting for further help to utter his message.

Receiving none, however, he took another sip of the claret cup and said:

"Hilda wants to see you in Parliament. She thinks you will cut a good figure there, and do some good work, and expound some of her pet theories—not, between ourselves, that her theories are worth much—and, therefore, she has sent me to tell you that she and I will have great pleasure in paying your electioneering bill if you like to offer yourself as a candidate for Widdorburgh or any other constituency."

"You are very good, more than generous," stammered the young man; "but—I—"

"There, don't say anything now, that's a good fellow," said his lordship, with the air of a man who had relieved his mind of a great load and was anxious to forget it. "Think the matter over and write to me about it. And now have you been writing any more poems lately?"

Harry replied as coherently as he could under the circumstances, but the transition was rather abrupt, and the offer from this quarter to pay his electioneering expenses quite took his breath away.

Cleverly as Lord Dacre thought he had stated the matter one fact seemed to stand out barely and boldly to the young man's mind.

Lady Hilda had almost compelled her father



[MUTUAL CONFIDENCE.]

to come to him and offer to supply him with money to further his ambitious views, and he felt that if he accepted it he would be bound in his own turn sooner or later to offer his hand in marriage to his benefactress.

She might not accept him, it is true, but the offer would have to be made.

It was a great temptation for an ambitious, struggling man, and all the greater because Rosalind was so far away from him and held out to him no sign of love.

His mind was in a whirl, he answered at random, scarcely heeding what was said to him, or what he said, until Lord Dacre, in his usual gossiping style, observed:

"And I hear Miss Redesdale makes quite a sensation wherever she goes—a sweet, lovely girl, with no strong-minded notions and no hankering after politics in her; I wonder if the marriage will come off shortly."

"What marriage?" Harry found himself asking.

"Why, Rosalind Redesdale's marriage with Lord Oaklands. Of course you have heard of it, he is down at Scarborough with them, but the young lady is a sad flirt, I fear, if half that my correspondent tells me is true."

If Lord Dacre had earnestly wanted to marry his daughter to this penniless man he could not have gone a surer way to work than by relating this little bit of gossip.

And yet there were few things that he was more anxious to avoid.

But he was a blunderer, and he had that disagreeable faculty of always saying things that would be much better left unsaid.

He noticed now, however, that Harcourt looked pale and faint, and he advised him to lie down and not trouble himself any more with work that day.

Good advice, no doubt, and Harry smiled as he listened to it, but a decision must be come to that night that would probably influence his whole life.

At length the good-intentioned but tiresome

old peer took his departure, and Harry, feeling singularly faint and ill, staggered back to his sitting-room and flung himself down upon the couch, too heart sick at the thought of the prize he believed he had lost to realise the value of the prize waiting for him to grasp.

"I flatter myself that I managed that very cleverly," mused Lord Dacre as he made his way through the court in which Harcourt's rooms were situated to the spot where he had left his carriage.

"If he take the money he won't expect to get Hilda with it," he continued, talking to himself, "and she can't very well propose to him. He is a capital fellow, but I don't believe for a moment that she is in love with him, it is only feminine perversity, and the love of singularity on her part. If Dunmow had had the sense to propose why—"

He was pulled up suddenly by a man coming at some speed round a sharp corner, and nearly knocking him down.

The two men grasped each other, or they must both have fallen. Then the younger began to apologise, and Lord Dacre, instantly forgetting his anger, exclaimed:

"Dunmow?"

"Good heavens! Yes! Lord Dacre, who would have thought of meeting you here?"

"Or you? I heard you were in Hastings with your people."

"So I was this morning, but I am on my way to Harcourt's rooms."

"I have just left him," volunteered Lord Dacre, with his usual faculty for saying too much.

"Have you, indeed? Is he going to contest Widborough? Because if he doesn't I shall."

"You? How unfortunate, and I have just been to offer to pay his expenses if he will contest the seat."

"Just like my luck," said the young man, despondently, "I am always too late; but I didn't know that you took an interest in politics."

"I don't, I should be glad if I never heard the word mentioned again. I hate the very sound of it. It was Hilda who made me come here to-day."

And the old man's face expressed far more graphically than his words did how very unwilling he had been to come.

"Then I may as well go back as I came, I suppose," said Dunmow, despondently. "Of course, Harcourt accepted your generous offer?"

"No, I didn't give him the chance. He is to write to me; he doesn't seem very well. He is a sterling good fellow—but—but I wish I hadn't a daughter so full of whims."

"Whims?" repeated Dunmow, questioningly.

"Whims, my dear fellow, nothing but whims," said the old peer, querulously. "But go and see our friend in his den, he is working too hard."

Then the men parted with a grip of the hand that meant more than mere friendship.

Of the two young men Lord Dacre liked Harry Harcourt by far the best, but he would much prefer Lord Dunmow for a son-in-law.

As for Dunmow himself he mounted the steps to Harry's chambers with far less eagerness than that with which he had performed any previous part of his journey. He seemed to have met with disappointment before he reached his friend's threshold.

"Mr. Arcourt can't see no one," said the clerk, who replied to Lord Dunmow's knock.

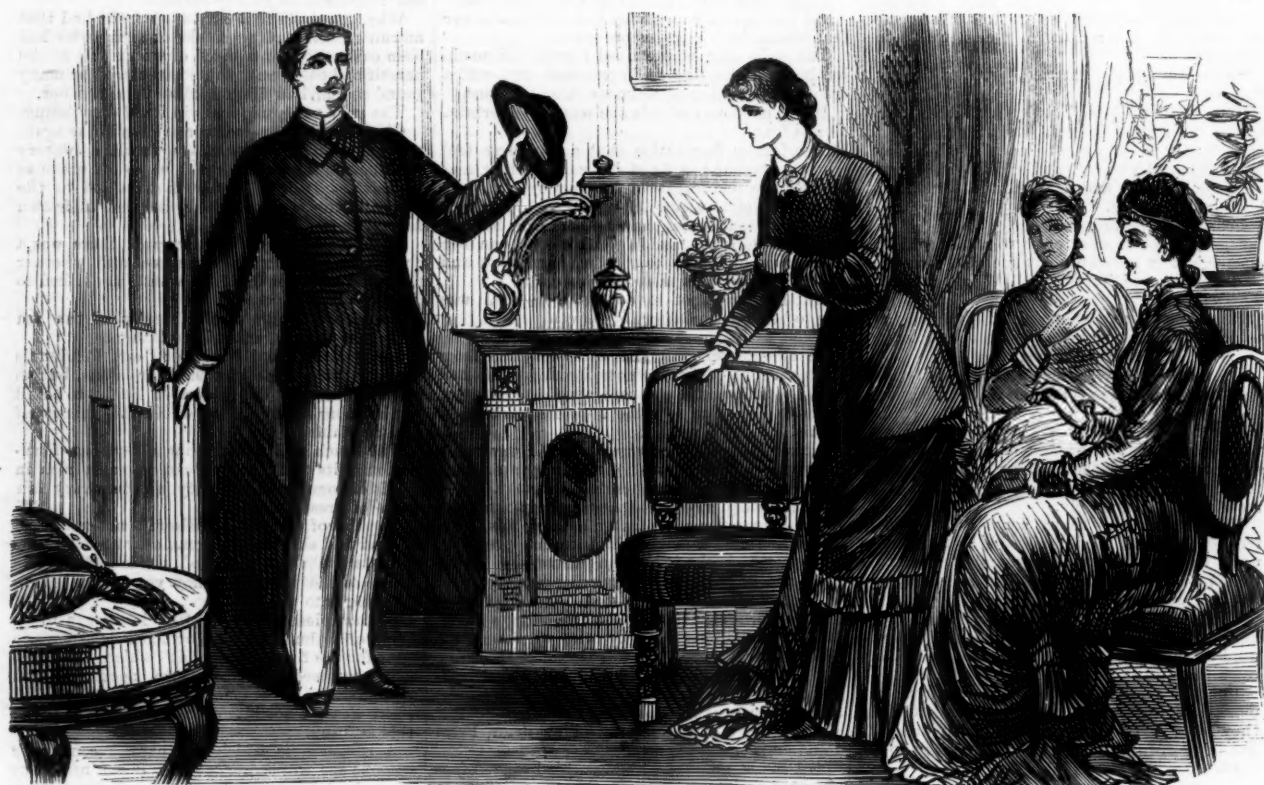
"Take that card to him and he will see me," was the imperative response, which made the youth somewhat unwillingly obey him.

He took the card, but a few seconds later he came back with a scared expression of countenance, saying:

"Will you please come this way, quick, sir?"

Lord Dunmow followed him to the side of a couch, upon which lay Harry Harcourt, white as a corpse, insensible, and looking as though he were dead.

(To be Continued.)



[SURPRISE.]

PEARL PENDENNIS.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

CHAPTER I.

THE SECRET OF THE SEA.

"I CAN'T abide her proud ways," remarked old Mrs. Tregowan, emphatically. "Where did her get 'em from's what I wonder."

"From the say, where her come from, I reckon," replied Mrs. Lowry, with a significant nod. "She ain't like one o' we, but her's a rare good girl if her be proud."

"But what's her got to be proud on?" persisted Mrs. Tregowan, "her's good-looking, I grant 'ee, worse luck, but good looks comes by nature, and ain't things as folks should be proud on."

"No, but folks might be proud as had got such a face as Pearl Pendennis," observed Mrs. Lowry, admiringly, "look at her there as her comes along, is't any wonder as all the lads be wild after her?"

"'Tis a sad pity if 'tain't no wonder," replied Mrs. Tregowan, in a desponding tone, "my son Tony ain't been worth his salt since he's took to runnin' arter her."

At this moment the subject of their conversation joined the two women.

She was a tall, fair girl, of some seventeen or eighteen summers, with bright golden hair, dark brown eyes, and cheeks that were white—or that would have been so if the sun had not given them a warm, creamy tint.

Very beautiful in form and feature was Pearl Pendennis, but it was a beauty that was uncommon in this part of the world, where the men and women, as a rule, have dark hair and grey eyes, and the maids may be noted for their heavy, plump figures and their round, rosy,

healthy faces, but not for any refinement of beauty.

There was something witch-like in those great dark eyes set in Pearl's pale face, and in the waving, curling masses of her glittering hair.

Something refined and yet so weird that it seemed to be somewhat uncanny to the rough, superstitious people amongst whom her lot was cast.

But if the women distrusted and disliked her, there was but one opinion among the men, old and young, and that was that Pearl Pendennis was the loveliest girl in Falmouth.

Whence she came or what her parentage might be nobody knew. She had been found by old David Pengelly on a piece of wreck floating off Falmouth Harbour, some seventeen years ago, and he, a coast-guardsmen living at the station at Pendennis Point at the time, had taken the infant to his childless wife, who had cherished it with more than a mother's care.

The name "Pearl" was painted on the piece of wreck upon which the babe was found, and thus it happened that as no one came to claim the child old David and his wife named her Pearl Pendennis.

Good fortune came to the Pengellys soon after their adoption of little Pearl, for a distant relative died and left David and his wife a tiny freehold cottage, not far from the bay, with a very small piece of garden attached to it, and a sum of money in the savings' bank as a kind of nest-egg.

Many of his neighbours thought David Pengelly venturesome when he threw up his situation and bought a fishing-smack, but the old man knew what he was about. Plenty of money was to be made out of fish if a man had a little capital to start with, and David was so successful that at one time he had amassed quite a comfortable little fortune.

He lost most of it, however, one wild, stormy winter when two of his pilchard boats and all their crews went to the bottom of the sea, and

from that time forward David gave up all speculation and, with just enough to live upon, he spent his time in his garden or in wandering about with his telescope in his hands, watching, with never-abating interest, the numerous craft that came in and went out of the splendid harbour.

His almost constant companion was little Pearl.

In the days of his prosperity she would go down to the beach at St. Mawes, opposite Pendennis Point, with him, to meet the smacks coming in laden with their finny treasures, and later on, when he was sadly in want of occupation, she would walk hand in hand with him in all his rambles, listening to his strange tales of wrecks and smugglers, and making him live over again the days of his youth as he told the fair child about them.

A strange life for a girl to lead, but then Pearl Pendennis was strange in all her ways and fancies. The old people humoured her odd whims. She disliked needlework, and all household occupations, and old Mrs. Pengelly took good care that nothing of the kind should be required of her.

It was no trouble to Pearl to learn anything for which she had a fancy, and almost as soon as she could walk she had learned to read.

Her education had been without method or order, and to a great extent she had taught herself, but though she might not have been able to pass a very stiff examination she knew a great deal more than many of the girls who do so with flying colours.

For Pearl never forgot that she was a waif in the world, and that the day would one day come when she must be able to take care of herself.

Once or twice she had ventured to hint at the necessity of training herself for a life of self-dependence, but old David had taken her words so much to heart that he had been ill for a week after, and he only condescended to recover when she solemnly promised never to

leave him or his wife while either of them was alive.

"Unless thee gets married, lass," chuckled the old man, "we'll let 'ee go to a husband of thee own, but not for nothing else, that's the bargain."

"I shall never get married," replied the girl, "never."

"Oh, list to the lass. That's what all the maids say till their time be come, and then they're all of a flutter to get away to nests of their own. Ah, I knaws, I knaws," and old David slapped his knee heartily, and laughed and chuckled at his own presumption.

Pearl made no protestations.

She did not even attempt to reason out the matter, yet in her own heart she felt that marriage for her was impossible. Whom could she marry?

She had admirers enough, it is true, but not to one of them could she give a tender thought, still less could she give herself.

Competence and comparative poverty had made very little difference to David Pengelly's social status.

His friends had been coastguardmen and fishermen, and the owners or part owners of small smacks, and those whom he had known ten or fifteen years ago he knew now, neither more nor less intimately.

These men or their sons came pretty frequently to old David's cottage as Pearl grew up to womanhood, and the young men smoked their pipes with him and looked sheepishly and shyly at her.

She paid no heed to them, and sat poring over her books, or, as more frequently happened, she would slip off to her own little room, and there remain until the visitors were gone.

But the more she avoided her suitors the more eager some of them became, and, finding they could not get any encouragement from the girl herself, they boldly told their story to old David.

"No use, lad, no use," the old man would say, "the maid has no mind to marry, so 'tis no use your looking arter her."

But two of Pearl's admirers were not to be put off with a refusal at second hand, and each of them vowed that by fair means or by foul means he would marry her.

These were Anthony Tregowan, better known to his intimate friends as Tony; and Gilbert Polthwait, whose Christian name was generally abbreviated to Gil.

The rivals—if such they might be called where neither had the least chance of success—were as unlike each other as Pearl was unlike the ordinary women of her class.

Both of them had been seamen, and both were now fishermen and part owners of the smacks in which they pursued their perilous calling.

But here all resemblance ended, for while Tony Tregowan was but little above the medium height, with closely curling brown hair, well-cut, almost refined-looking features and light blue eyes, Gil Polthwait was exceptionally tall and savagely handsome.

My description may seem strange, but his really was the beauty of a savage rather than that of a civilized man.

Above six feet in height, with massively broad shoulders and splendidly developed muscles, his uncovered neck, red and brown with long exposure to the weather, seemed like a column of strength supporting a head and face that made even Pearl Pendennis shrink with fear or admiration, she scarcely knew which, when she looked upon it.

For Gil Polthwait's face was as uncommon as it was handsome.

His eyes were dark blue, though they looked black under their heavy eyelashes and overhanging brows, and they had in them a peculiar power of fascination which compelled anyone upon whom they were fixed to look at their possessor again and again, and, worse still, to think of him involuntarily at all sorts of inopportune times.

The rest of his face was massive and regular,

the lower portion having a short, dark beard and a long, twisted moustache to cover it.

Pearl Pendennis was afraid of Gil Polthwait.

He was the only man who had ever made her feel uncomfortable in his presence.

The only man whose fixed regard had made her heart flutter like an imprisoned bird, and a creeping sensation of sickness steal over her.

It was not love; of this she was quite certain.

It was fear.

The fear or fascination that a bird may feel when a serpent has fixed its gaze upon it and marked the poor creature for its prey.

Yet Gil Polthwait smiled upon Pearl with more passionate tenderness than he had ever felt for any woman before, and, could he have won her love, he would have been gentle and true and faithful to her for the rest of his days.

But Pearl was not to be won, least of all was she to be won by Gilbert Polthwait.

Even to her pure ears stories had come of his wild adventures, and the disappearance from Falmouth of one girl whom Pearl herself had loved as a playmate was said, with bated breath, to have been due to some reckless wickedness of his.

This might only be scandal, but it was not a story calculated to make Pearl Pendennis regard the hero of it with any increase of favour.

The consequence was that the next time she met the huge fisherman, after hearing this story, Pearl was conveniently blind to his presence, and when he spoke to her she just replied with a little nod of her head and hurried on.

A proceeding that irritated her big admirer all the more from the fact of there being a group of his companions close by who witnessed his discomfiture.

"Mate for thee better, Gil," laughed a lumbering sailor, as he smoked a short clay pipe and lounged against the side of a wall. "I saw young Squire Rowson looking arter Pearl Pendennis the other day."

Gil made no reply, though his bronzed face changed colour, but he walked hastily away from his companions and they saw no more of him for the rest of that day.

"I wouldn't like to stand in Pearl Pendennis's shoes if her gets Gil Polthwait's blood up," remarked the sailor who had previously spoken; "he'll stick at nothing. 'Twas a near shave as Jim Rowsden had for his life."

"Ay, but Gil don't warve women," remarked another of the group; "'tis always them big, blustering chaps as is soonest turned round a woman's little finger."

At which there was a general laugh, for the speaker himself was no pigmy in point of stature, and it was notorious that he was pretty considerably henpecked.

But Gil Polthwait did not go to sea that afternoon; another man took his place in the smack, and Pearl, quite unconscious of danger, felt moved that evening to go for a solitary stroll on the shore.

CHAPTER II.

A ROUGH WOOER.

DAVID PENGELLY'S cottage stood almost within a stone's-throw of the beach formed by the bay which is divided from Falmouth Harbour by Pendennis Point and Castle.

But though so close to the shore that the sound of the waves could be distinctly heard, no glimpse of the sea could be obtained except from the upper windows.

The country, hereabouts, is all hill and valley; the modern houses are built in terraces, and look from a distance as though the foundations of each tier were laid on a level with the roofs of the one below it, like the seats in an amphitheatre.

David's house happened to be quite in a valley, the garden being sheltered from the sea by the cottage itself, and hence it was not an unusual thing in fine weather for the old man and woman and Pearl to spend a great deal of their time among the flowers and vegetables.

On this particular evening an east wind was

blowing. David had a slight attack of rheumatism, his wife was busy darning stockings, and Pearl was singularly restless.

Why she could scarcely say, but she had that morning been reading a tale of a girl who had been cast ashore on a piece of wreck just as she herself had been, and whose parents, after many years' search, had discovered and claimed her.

The very suggestion was in itself disquieting.

Old David had assured her over and over again that her parents must have found a watery grave, since no people could be so inhuman as to leave a babe of a few months old to the mercy of the sea, while they secured their own safety.

Still, she had sometimes argued, there was a chance that they might be alive, and whether they were alive or dead she would have liked to know who they were.

But this was one of the secrets of the sea which she was never likely to fathom.

It was an unusual thing for Pearl Pendennis to want to wander about the shore alone, but no one could dream of any danger likely to befall her in doing so, least of all would the girl herself feel any alarm.

The beach at Falmouth has a peculiar fascination of its own, for it is exceptionally rich in shells of considerable beauty, and in a very fair state of preservation.

In point of fact the shore here is not composed of sand and shingle as is commonly the case, but consists almost entirely of shells which the action of the waves has not yet succeeded in grinding into powder.

So that pleasant occupation is always to be found on Falmouth beach by those who care to hunt for the finer specimens which the girls are accustomed to string into necklaces and other articles of personal adornment.

But Pearl is not intent upon looking for shells this evening.

A restlessness which she cannot control or account for urges her to get down near the water, and she communicates her desire to Mrs. Pengelly, who says at once:

"Take thee hat, and get along wi' thee, lass, and if thee wants somebody for to go with 'ee, there's Mary Trebay will go, I don't doubt."

But Pearl preferred to go alone, for Mary Trebay was one of the girls whose name had been associated rather too freely with that of Gil Polthwait.

So Pearl set off for her ramble alone.

The tide never recedes to any great distance, for the shore is very steep, but it was sufficiently far out this evening to enable the girl to walk round the point of rocks that separates the Gyllyngvase from the Swan Pool Beach, when she turned back and began slowly to retrace her steps.

There is a footpath at the top of the cliff, but Pearl preferred the beach, rough as it was, and she had walked a few steps in the direction of home when, feeling tired, she sat down upon a piece of rock, her face turned seaward.

The sea was very calm, and the rays of the setting sun were gleaming brightly upon the red sails of numerous fishing smacks, as they sailed out of the harbour and shaped their course westward.

"Gilbert Polthwait is there," she thought, as she believed she recognised his smack in the far distance. "I wish he would never come back," she added.

"Not that I want him to be drowned," she exclaimed, half aloud, shocked at the possible interpretation that might be placed upon her thoughts. "But I don't want to see him any more; I am afraid of him."

She had scarcely uttered these words before a shadow seemed to stand between her and the sea, and with a startled cry she sprang to her feet, for Gil Polthwait was before her.

"I've frightened you," he said, with an eagle-like glance; "you didn't hear me coming?"

"No," she replied, recovering her self-possession with a strong effort. "I didn't hear you. I thought that was your boat out there," and she pointed seaward.

"It is, I sent another man in my stead. I had a mind to have a talk with you, Pearl."

Her heart quaked; but of whatever stock she came cowardice was no part of her inheritance, and, though such a frail, slight girl might well fear the giant by her side, her own proud spirit and the consciousness that her only safety lay in refusing to see danger nerved her to say, calmly:

"Well, talk away, there'll be plenty of time for you to say a good deal between now and our reaching home."

And she took a step forward—not in haste, or he would have caught hold of her, but as though she expected him to walk by her side.

"Won't 'ee sit down a bit?" he asked, not liking to have the programme he had marked out for himself disarranged, and yet feeling small and helpless before her fearless attitude.

"I've been sitting as long as I care to; and the evening is a little chilly," she replied, with one of her rare smiles. "But we'll walk slowly if you like."

To this he could make no reasonable objection, but it annoyed him, and for a few seconds the two walked on side by side in silence.

At length he said:

"You've fought very shy of me of late, Pearl."

"Have I?" she replied, calmly.

"Yes—why is it?"

"Oh, I fight shy of most men you know," with the nearest approach at coquetry that she had ever practised.

"I don't mind that; I like a modest woman, not one as have got a laugh and a joke for every man that comes along. But I want you to think of me in a different way from other men, Pearl. I spoke my mind about you to old David, and he said he'd tell 'ee."

Pearl never thought so meanly of herself in her life as she did at this moment.

Her natural impulse was to tell Gil Polthwait that she would never marry him and that he had better pay his attentions where they would be more welcome.

But her old terror of the man was strong upon her, and added to it was the unreasonable conviction that he had not taken the trouble to employ somebody to fill his place in the boat without some sinister motive which boded her no good.

Thus the instinct of self-preservation made her pause and temporise, when, had she followed the dictates of her own heart, she would have ended the conversation sharply and made her way home alone.

"Yes, father did tell me what you'd said," she replied, slowly, "and I said then, as I've said before, that I'd no mind to marry. Besides," she added, looking up to his face with a sudden movement that was like a challenge, "I've heard you were going to marry Mary Trebay."

He uttered a savage oath as she spoke, though he tried to smother it when he saw the angry and insulted expression of the girl's face, and he said, eagerly:

"I ask your pardon, Pearl, for my words, but I was vexed to think you listened to women's tattle. There's no truth in it; I've no thought of marrying Mary Trebay and never had."

She made no reply, but her eyes wandered over the fair scene before her, and she felt not a little relieved at the assurance the sight conveyed, for she could be seen from Pendennis Castle and from the coast-guard station, while it was always possible that someone might be walking along the pathway on the cliff above her.

The month was October and there were but few strangers about, still it would be absurd to suppose that Gilbert Polthwait would attempt to offer her violence in a spot where he could so easily be seen and recognised, and her courage rose in proportion to her feeling of safety.

"Why don't you speak?" he asked, at length, irritated at her silence.

"Because I don't know what to say," she replied, "and upon my word I think you are a very rough lover," she went on, more daringly, "if you talk like this to a girl who isn't bound to

you how would you talk to your wife if you had one?"

"It's because you're not bound to me, Pearl; if you was I'd worship the very ground you tread upon, and I'd tear the heart out of any man who dared to lift his eyes to you."

"How very uncomfortable," she said, trying to speak lightly. "But, seriously," she added, "aren't you engaged to marry Mary Trebay?"

"No; once for all I'm not and I never shall be," he replied, passionately, "and now tell me, Pearl, will you be my wife? We don't go a step further till you've answered me."

He looked so threatening and so determined that, for the first time that evening, Pearl's temper came to the surface, stifling all considerations of fear or of prudence.

They had by this time reached the bathing beach and were within ten minutes' walk of David Pengelly's cottage, while they were likewise on a spot which all pedestrians along the coast must pass.

"How dare you speak like this to me?" she exclaimed, suddenly facing him, while her dark eyes flashed and her pale, beautiful countenance seemed to glow with fiercest anger. "Do you suppose that I am to be frightened into promising to wed you?"

"I don't want to frighten you," he replied, somewhat taken aback by her defiant attitude, "but I've sworn to have your word to be my wife before the sun goes down."

There was something so dogged and determined in his face that nothing but intense irritation and anger saved the girl from giving expression to the fear with which he inspired her.

But her quick ear had caught the sound of a dog's bark and of approaching footsteps, and she knew that if she could but temporise for a few minutes she would be safe.

"I wouldn't make such a promise when I'm asked in such a way; no, not if I were dying to give it," she replied, positively, "you can't know much of women, Gil Polthwait, or you wouldn't try to win one in such a fashion as that."

The man winced, but he was dogged in his determination, and he asked, sullenly:

"And you won't promise me?"

"No, I won't—not now," she replied, decisively.

"Will you promise me another time if I bide awhile?" he asked, in a yielding tone.

"I don't know; I won't be frightened into anything," she replied, defiantly.

At this moment the bark of a dog close at hand told Gilbert Polthwait that his opportunity for violence, had he meditated it, was gone.

Pearl turned away and began to walk quickly towards her home, and Gilbert stood hesitating whether or not he would follow her, when his indecision was turned to fury at seeing the owner of the dog hasten after the girl.

"Miss Pendennis, pray don't be in such a hurry, do let me speak to you," said Rupert Rosemullion, as he reached her side.

"Not now," she replied, a trifle nervously. "I have been very much frightened; I am so glad that you came when you did. Don't speak to that man, he is dangerous. Good-night."

She said all this without pausing, and in a hurried, breathless manner, as she hastened on towards David Pengelly's cottage, the roof of which was now in sight.

Rupert Rosemullion paused in undisguised surprise.

Oddly enough he had seen Pearl Pendennis from a distant hill, and was making his way towards her when to his chagrin he had seen her accosted by the tall fisherman.

Too far distant to hear their conversation, he had followed and kept his eyes upon them and he felt convinced that the girl was in fear if not in danger.

Hence he had made haste on to join her and this was how he had been received.

He was still standing where she had left him when Gilbert Polthwait came forward with quick strides and roughly accosted him.

"Evening, squire. How do you come to know

she?" with a nod of the head in the direction Pearl had taken.

"What business is that of yours, my man?" was the haughty retort.

"This much, that I'll break every bone in your blessed body if you come between Pearl Pendennis and me. So you be warned!"

"I wish you'd repeat your warning in the presence of a third person," said Mr. Rosemullion, angrily.

"Do 'ee? I ain't quite such a fool; but I'll keep my word without witnesses, as you'll have cause to know if you fills that girl's head with rubbish and flattery."

"Thank you, I'm not afraid," was the disdainful reply; "and I certainly shall not be influenced by your threats in any case."

Then the young man whistled to his dog and went on his way, leaving the fisherman to expend his rage in coarse oaths which were unheard by other ears than his own and harmed no one but himself.

The absurdity of his conduct never occurred to Polthwait's half-savage mind.

Away from Pearl Pendennis nothing seemed more easy than to compel her to promise to marry him, but in her presence, when he looked at her clear eye and proud, pale face and felt the subtle power that a lofty mind and a clear intellect exercise over such rugged, untutored natures as his own, he became weak and irresolute as a child.

He was a man who might possibly have in him the capacity for a certain limited amount of good, but there could be no doubt about his being capable of unlimited wickedness if inclination or self-interest urged him thereto.

And this night jealousy added to unrequited love drove him wild with the fierce desire to avenge his fancied wrongs, for instinct, rather than reason, told him that Rupert Rosemullion was his rival.

CHAPTER III.

THE LADIES OF ROSEMULLION.

ROSEMULLION HOUSE stands about a mile from Falmouth.

It is not a large building for a manor house, but the estate of which it forms a part is rich and fertile, and the owner of it is accounted a wealthy man.

But the Rosemullions of the present generation are comparatively poor, for, though the estate is rich in mineral wealth, two once prosperous mines upon it have been rendered useless by the breaking in of water, which has flooded them and stopped the workings.

With Rupert—the present squire—live two maiden sisters, the youngest of whom is more than twenty years older than himself.

Very prim ladies are the two Misses Rosemullion. Perfect pinks of propriety!

Their ideas of their own importance are ridiculously exaggerated, and they look upon their brother Rupert as a big boy of whom it behoves them to take excessive care.

Matrimony is a tabooed subject at Rosemullion House, and whenever it does crop up it is spoken of by the two sisters with bated breath as though it were a kind of crime.

This had not always been the case.

Rumour with her many tongues told odd stories about Miss Tansey Rosemullion—the elder of the two—and said that she had only been saved by her father at the last moment from running away with a groom.

The hard-handed old squire had locked his daughter up and bought the groom off, having previously convinced that mercenary young man that Miss Tansey had no fortune of her own and would come to him penniless if she came to him at all.

The younger sister Honor had met with some accident in her youth that had scarred her face, and she had never had an admirer—no, not even a stableman.

Suffering from enforced celibacy themselves these two ladies were unanimous in their opinion, first, that it would be very wrong for their

brother Rupert to marry; and, secondly, that if he did marry he ought to select a wife for her position in the county and her fortune, not for any personal excellence of her own, and least of all for any mere fading beauty of feature she might possess.

Brought up under petticoat government, very much spoilt, and allowed to have his own way in so many things, Rupert Rosemullion had felt no desire to possess himself of that forbidden luxury a wife until he met Pearl Pendennis.

The beginning of his acquaintance with her had not been particularly romantic.

She was walking along the narrow main street of the town, near the harbour, having been on an errand for her adopted mother, when the young squire, struck by her rare beauty, shyly followed to get another glimpse of her fair face.

Fortune was in his favour, for he had not proceeded a dozen steps before, amid shouts of alarm and warning, a horse with a light cart behind it came dashing along the street, and Pearl Pendennis would have been knocked down by the frightened horse if Rupert Rosemullion had not caught her in his arms and swung her aside just in time to save her from the impending danger.

She was so startled and unnerved that it was but natural that the young man who had thus saved her should see her safely home and should have a chat with old David and his wife, who were warm in their expressions of gratitude.

From that day Rupert Rosemullion felt himself free to speak to Pearl when they met, and even to make an occasional call upon old David Pengelly and his wife.

He knew his danger.

He was like a moth hovering round a brilliant light, attracted by a power too strong to be resisted and yet nervously anxious to avoid singeing his wings.

Now he began to realise that his sisters were not unalloyed blessings.

They had no intention of ever finding a home elsewhere than at Rosemullion House.

It is true that they were each of them well provided for by their father's will, but they regarded the family mansion as their home, and it would go hard with them before they would leave it.

"I couldn't bring Pearl home to them," mused the young man; "even if she'd have me. They'd find fault with everything she said or did and make her life wretched and mine too. No, I mustn't go near her—I mustn't think of winning her."

Good advice to give himself, though not easy advice to follow.

He did follow it, however, to a certain extent.

He watched Pearl from a distance. He fed his love, while he told himself he was starving it, and thus day by day the passion grew deeper and stronger, until slowly but surely it overmastered his resolution and his prudence.

His encounter with Gil Polthwait brought the struggle between his love and worldly wisdom to a crisis.

All day long he had been thinking of Pearl, until the desire to see her had become too strong to be resisted, and he had called his dog and had set off to walk to David Pengelly's cottage.

Whether he would knock at the door when he reached it he had not quite decided; that he would leave to chance and the impulse of the moment, but he would at any rate walk down and look at the house where she was, and perchance he might even have the luck to meet Pearl herself.

When he had come more than half way he saw the girl, whom he recognised, on the beach.

Here was an opportunity.

His heart beat high. All considerations of prudence were cast to the winds, and he was making his way rapidly towards her when he found himself forestalled.

I am afraid they were not blessings that he poured upon Gil Polthwait's head, but it never occurred to him to think of the huge fisherman

as Pearl's possible lover, and therefore he was as much surprised as startled at the girl's agitation when he addressed her and at the man's threatening words immediately afterwards.

Now the more he thought of them the more they stung him.

Pearl Pendennis, with her rare pure beauty and her proud and lofty intellect, to be the mate of a man like Gil Polthwait!

The idea was utterly preposterous.

Incongruous to the last degree.

The man must be mad, and the people, if there were such, who supported his claims must be worse than the fellow himself.

But the very thought of the fisherman's pretensions goaded the young squire to a condition of mind such as he had never experienced before.

It was not only love and jealousy that excited him, but with it there was mingled a feeling of loathing at the idea of Gil Polthwait's presumption, and of horror at the thought of Pearl being ever placed in such a man's power.

It was late that night when Rupert Rosemullion reached home.

He had been wandering about for hours trying to cool the fever in his blood and to clear his head before meeting the steady, critical gaze of his sisters.

The footsore condition of his canine companion had made him, at length, turn his steps homewards.

Late though it was his sisters were sitting up for him, looking like grim fates ready to judge him.

"You are late, brother," remarked Miss Tansey, severely.

"Am I?" he replied, wearily, throwing himself into an arm-chair.

"Yes," here chimed in Miss Honor; "and we have heard strange things about you. Who is this fisherman's daughter that you spend your time in running after?"

The day before and Rupert Rosemullion would have resented this question in angry terms.

Now he simply asked, quietly:

"Are you speaking of Pearl Pendennis?"

"Yes, I think that is the creature's name," replied Miss Tansey, disdainfully.

"I don't know anything about her family," replied the young man, in dangerously deliberate tones, "because she was washed in on a piece of wreck off Pendennis Point, and none of her folks have ever claimed her, but I know that she'll be my wife if she's so minded."

"Your wife!" exclaimed the maiden ladies, in unaffected horror.

"Yes, my wife," he replied, firmly.

"But where will you take her? You cannot expect us to live on terms of equality with such a woman," exclaimed Miss Honor, incautiously.

"No, I shouldn't like you and Pearl to live in the same house," was the cool reply; "I think husband and wife should be together alone without any relations to come between them, so you'd best make arrangements for a home of your own."

This was too much even for Miss Tansey's good breeding, and now thoroughly exasperated she sprang to her feet, caught her big brother by the shoulders and tried her best to shake him as she screamed, in shrill tones:

"Rupert, are you mad or are you drunk?"

She might as well have tried to shake a sleepy bull.

He only smiled with a provoking consciousness of power as he said:

"I am neither drunk nor mad. But I'm going to have a wife, and I'm going to choose her for myself, and I don't ask you to put yourselves out of the way even to be civil to her. Now good night, sisters both."

And so saying he rose from his seat and left them.

"I felt it was coming," said Miss Honor, throwing herself back in her chair in an attitude of despair and despondency.

"Then if you felt it was coming it's a pity you didn't show more sense than to speak of the girl," replied her sister, snappishly.

"Why, you told me to do so," exclaimed Honor, indignantly.

"Fiddlesticks," was the reply. "What's to become of us? For my part I shan't go away from my father's house—there! If Rupert will bring home a wife the place is big enough for all of us, and if it isn't she must go—I shan't. He can't turn us out."

"I don't know what he can't do when he could speak to us as he's spoken to-night," returned Miss Honor, dolefully, "and I've often heard that when a man makes up his mind to wed a wife there's no turning him. I wonder if it would be any good going to the girl and telling her we don't want her?" continued Honor, who was something of a simpleton.

"Of course it wouldn't, stupid; it would make her more determined than ever to marry him. But we'll wait till the morning. If we can't turn him we'll take sides with her; you know she doesn't belong to those common people, and she might turn out to be somebody after all."

And Miss Tansey tried to look knowing, though all the time she was very rueful.

These poor old ladies were very much like a pair of old hens who had adopted a big duckling that would seek the water and would consort with other ducks despite all their warnings.

And, beyond this, they had a cat-like love for their old home.

Other houses might be much more grand than the home of the Rosemullions, but no four walls could enclose a place so dear, particularly to the elder woman.

This was not so much the case with Miss Honor.

She would have been quite ready to exchange her brother's home for that of a husband, and had not yet begun to regard herself as permanently upon the shelf.

But Miss Tansey thought she should die if she were turned out of her old home.

Her brother's rebellion against her authority was as nothing to this threat, and she rose from her bed the next morning heroically resolved to go and see Pearl Pendennis and hold out a welcoming hand to her in the eager hope of making a friend of her.

"If I am kind to her she can't have the conscience to turn me out of my father's house," was the poor old lady's thought.

And thus, without breathing a word of her intention to her brother, she dressed herself with great care, and, accompanied by her sister, set off that very afternoon to David Pengelly's cottage.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT DOES PEARL SAY?"

PEARL PENDENNIS had been sitting alone most of the day succeeding her encounter with Gil Polthwait. In point of fact she was rather afraid to go out.

Old David was still confined to the house with his rheumatism, and at the best of times he would be but a weak protector against such an adversary as the big fisherman.

The girl's ignorance of the world and her very genuine dread of the man exaggerated her possible danger, and but for her promise to old David never to leave him or his wife, except for a husband, and for the debt of gratitude she owed them, she would have gone away to London, in the belief that she could hide herself in the great city of which she had read such wonderful stories.

This course was impracticable, however, and she was thinking her only safe place would be to shut herself up in the house, when the sound of carriage wheels, stopping at their humble door, made her start up and run to the window.

An old-fashioned carriage stood at the garden gate, and she was just in time to see two ladies descend from it, but they were out of sight in the porch before she could recognise them.

How Pearl's heart beat!

Her dreams were coming true. Relatives had come to claim her; they would take her away, and—

Her heart sank again.

There were the old people who had been more than parents to her, and then there was Mr. Rosemullion.

A faint flush tinged her cheek as she thought of him, but she had no time for further speculation, for Mrs. Pengelly's voice could be heard from the foot of the stairs, calling:

"Here, Pearl, here be the ladies from Rosemullion come to see 'ee."

The ladies from Rosemullion!

Pearl's dreams were dissipated, and she went downstairs with wonder, and not a little nervousness to receive her strange visitors.

Pearl was always well dressed—particularly so for the class of people among whom she lived, and she was also one of those girls who are not dependent upon fine clothes or ornaments for their good looks, but whose clothes seem made for them, and being made and put on are forgotten.

To-day she had on a navy blue serge, fitting closely to her slender form, with plain bands of white linen at the throat and wrists. No lace or ribbons or sham jewellery.

The one small brooch she wore was a Cornish pebble polished, but her glittering golden hair, her dark eyes and her pale face stood out in contrast to the plain attire, and the proud women who came to patronise her and to win her good will involuntarily rose as she entered the room, and felt they were in the presence of an equal.

"We have heard of you from our brother, Miss Pendennis," remarked the elder of the two sisters, "and so we thought we should like to know you and welcome you into our family."

"It was very kind of Mr. Rosemullion to mention me," replied Pearl, somewhat taken aback by the old lady's words of welcome.

"Not at all, my dear, it was quite natural, and only right and proper that he should tell us all about you; but there is one thing, my dear, that now I have seen you I am quite sure we shall agree upon. I won't interfere with you in the least, neither Honor nor myself would ever forget that, as our brother's wife, you will naturally be the mistress of the house, but I do hope you won't insist upon our leaving it. I should die I believe if I had to live anywhere but at Rosemullion. You will promise me, dear Miss Pendennis, won't you?"

"Certainly, if my promise is of the least value," replied Pearl, with a look of utter bewilderment. "But I can't imagine why you should talk to me like this," she added, "I can't indeed."

"You are going to marry our brother, are you not?" asked Miss Tansey, who had insisted that the negotiations should be left to her.

"No, indeed, he has never even asked me," replied Pearl, with a quivering lip.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! What have I done? He'll never forgive me, never!" exclaimed Miss Rosemullion, rising to her feet and wringing her withered hands.

"Forgive you for what?" asked Pearl, becoming more puzzled than ever.

Before the agitated lady could explain her meaning, however, a fourth person appeared upon the scene—no other, indeed, than Rupert Rosemullion himself.

He was on his way to the cottage, meaning to seek Pearl and learn his fate, when, to his astonishment, he recognised his sisters' carriage standing at the door, and, convinced that they had come to work mischief, he somewhat unceremoniously joined them.

"Good afternoon, Pearl," he said, taking her unresisting hand in his own in a manner as though it belonged to him. "I see you have company," he added, glancing suspiciously at his sisters.

"Yes, we came to call upon Miss Pendennis," here volunteered Miss Tansey, nervously. "After what you said last night we thought it our duty to do so. And I want you to come and spend a day with us, my dear," she added, turning to Pearl, who still only half comprehended what all this must mean.

Her natural politeness made her reply that it would give her pleasure to accept the invitation, and then the ladies rose to their feet and some-

what hurriedly took their departure, after asking Pearl to arrange the day with their brother for her visit.

Perhaps the person most astonished at what he saw and heard was Rupert Rosemullion himself.

He rubbed his eyes, he could not credit the evidence of his senses. He was suspicious of his sisters, and determined not to be thwarted by them, and, with a whispered remark to Pearl that he was coming back, and wanted particularly to speak with her, he accompanied his sisters to their carriage, and when out of hearing of the inmates of the cottages he asked, sternly:

"What mischief brought you here?"

"None, we came to see her, and we like her so much, Rupert, she is such a lovely creature," replied Miss Tansey, somewhat too eagerly to be quite satisfactory to the young man's mind.

"And such a perfect lady," chimed in Miss Honor. "Get her to come and see us one day next week, Rupert, be sure you do."

Whereupon Rupert somewhat ungraciously shrugged his shoulders.

Feminine nature was a puzzle to him at the best of times, and this sudden and unaccountable change in his sisters' tactics was past his comprehension altogether.

When he returned to the cottage he was met by old David Pengelly, who, despite his rheumatism, had hobbled out of his room on purpose to see him.

"Morning, squire," said the old man, respectfully but firmly; "what may be your business here?"

"I came to see Pearl," was the reply.

"Ay, most on 'em comes to see Pearl, though they ain't all got the pluck to say so; but what doest want of the lass?"

"I want to marry her."

"Marry her?" repeated the old man; "honest and fair and above board?"

"Yes; you don't suppose my sisters would have come to see her and have invited her to come and see us if there had been any doubt as far as I am concerned?" replied the young man, warmly.

"And what does Pearl say?" asked David, slowly.

"I'll tell you that when you've given me the chance to ask her," was the reply.

And then, seeing the wearer of a dark blue dress in the arbour at the bottom of the garden, he strode off to join her.

"At last," he said, taking her hand and seating himself by her side; "we are together and alone at last. You know what I have come to say, Pearl?"

"How should I know?" she asked, timidly.

"Your heart should tell you, my darling; you know that I love you; you must have seen it in my eyes whenever they rested upon you."

She breathed a deep sigh of intense happiness, but she did not speak; her heart was too full for words.

Rupert, however, was not satisfied with silence, and he pleaded so warmly for some assurance of her love for him that at length she said:

"Yes; I do love you with my whole heart."

At which he caught her in his arms and kissed her sweet lips and called her by every fond name that he could think of, unconscious of the dark, murderous-looking face that watched him from behind the hedge.

Well was it for the lovers that Gil Polthwait had not some deadly weapon in his hand at this moment, or he would have ended their happiness and their lives upon the spot.

All unconscious of danger, however, they lived over the "old, old story," and were only brought to a tardy recollection of the lapse of time by the appearance of Mrs. Pengelly, who came out to tell them that tea was ready.

Then Rupert Rosemullion went into the house with Pearl and told the old couple of the success of his suit, and asked them to give him their Pearl for a wife.

And old David forgot his rheumatism and grew quite facetious about girls who were never going to marry.

But Pearl took it very quietly and sweetly; she was not overcome with the prospect of becoming the mistress of Rosemullion, but her heart was filled with love and with deep thankfulness for the knowledge that her love was requited.

It was late that evening when Rupert left David Pengelly's cottage to return to his own home.

The night was dark, the wind was high, and the sea was boisterous, and Pearl begged that he would not go back by the cliffs but would go into the town and get a conveyance or take the high road, which, though longer, was certainly the safest.

At another time Rupert would have laughed at her fears, but now her anxiety for his safety was very sweet to him and he readily promised to do as she wished.

Thus Gil Polthwait waited on the lonely road by the shore, watching for his intended victim in vain.

This was the second night he had wasted, at the busiest time of the pilchard fishery too, and he had engaged with the partner in his boat that he would go to sea the next day without fail.

"'Tis only put off," he muttered with an oath as the daylight dawned upon the sea. "I can bide my time, but he'll never go to church with Pearl Pendennis; that's fixed as fate."

CHAPTER V.

A LEAP FOR LOVE.

GILBERT POLTHWAIT did go to sea the next evening, and during the night a storm arose such as had not visited that coast for many years.

Weeping wives and mothers sat up through the long dark hours, unable to sleep, too anxious to talk, but praying silently for the safety of their loved ones.

When morning lighted up the stormy scene many anxious eyes scanned the horizon, but of the fleet of fishing boats that had left the harbour the previous night not half could be seen labouring back, and those that were seen crept on their way slowly, and were evidently disabled and sore put to it to keep afloat.

Many corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down;
And women were weeping and wringing their hands
For those who would never come back to the town.

It was an awful sight.

The calamity was so wide-spread and appalling, and poor old Mrs. Tregowan came weeping to Pearl Pendennis, telling the girl how her son Tony had loved her, and now he lay cold and stiff, having been one of the first to be flung ashore by the pitiless waves.

Pearl mingled her tears with those of the bereaved mother, and gave her such sympathy as was within her power, and all the time she wondered, half in hope, half in fear, whether or not Gil Polthwait had gone to sea that night, and, if so, had he returned?

She would not ask the question, however, and it was not until some days later that she learned that Gilbert and his boat were alike missing, but no one could do more than give a guess as to his fate.

That guess, however, was not favourable, and very soon he became numbered among those whom the sea had swallowed up in its mighty maw.

And, meanwhile, preparations had been made for Pearl's marriage.

As time wore on and their minds became more accustomed to the impending change, Miss Tansey and Miss Honor Rosemullion began to recover some of their old stiffness and dignity, and to think they had been somewhat hasty in holding out the olive branch to Pearl Pendennis.

But these thoughts never came when Pearl herself was by, for she charmed the sisters only

one degree less than she had charmed their brother.

It was the evening before their wedding.

Everything was ready even to the wedding-cake, and the plain white satin gown in which the bride was to be dressed on the morrow.

Pearl had said she would spend this evening alone, but just before sunset Rupert had come down to the cottage and had asked her to take a walk with him.

"Get along with 'ee," said Mrs. Pengelly, good-humouredly; "there's naught to be done as I can't do."

And thus urged Pearl acquiesced.

For a time the lovers walked along the sea shore, then, after passing the Swan Pool and the smelting works, they climbed the hill and got on to the brow of the steep cliff beyond the trees and high up above the sea that was tumbling noisily over the rocks below.

Pearl had lost her nervousness since Gilbert Polthwait had disappeared from the town, and she had not heard the strange story of his return, so she sat down amongst the bracken and listened to Rupert as he talked of the places they would go to on their honeymoon.

Suddenly in their rear the voice of a child in great pain or terror was heard, and Rupert sprang to his feet, listened, and then at Pearl's earnest request ran to the clump of trees from which the sound seemed to proceed.

Scarcely was her lover out of sight, however, before Pearl, who had risen to her feet, felt herself rudely clasped in the strong arms of a man, and, looking up, she recognised Gilbert Polthwait.

Fear and horror for a moment seemed to paralyze her and deprive her of the power of speech, then she knew she was being dragged down the steep side of a gully which led towards the wave-beaten rocks, where a boat was lying waiting for her in a tiny creek.

Like a sleeper labouring under the terrible influence of nightmare she strove to break the spell that was on her, and at last with an almost superhuman effort she uttered one loud, piercing shriek.

Her voice was quickly smothered by the ruffian who held her, but the alarm was given, and a second or two later Rupert Rosemullion was tearing down the cliff-side to her aid.

It is a race against time, with the probability of a terrible death in the deep sea before them all.

No one came to their aid.

There is no habitation near enough for its inmates to help them if they fall, and though they may be seen by telescopes from afar life will be extinct long before aid can reach them.

Polthwait has come upon his wild adventure alone.

He is reckless and desperate.

Pearl may have her choice of living or dying with him, but never again he has sworn shall her form be encircled by the arms of any man but himself. And he bids fair to keep his oath.

Already he is nearing the rocks, with Rupert Rosemullion close behind him, when he pauses, fiercely waves back his pursuer, and says, with a horrible oath:

"Another step and I'll drown her!"

Then to the girl, as Rosemullion pauses, he asks:

"Will you wed me, or will you die, Pearl?"

"Let me go. I hate you!" she gasped.

The next instant he had sprung with her in his arms into the deep sea.

Not together did they fall, however.

In that one final spring, with his living struggling burden in his arms, Polthwait had miscalculated his distance, and just failed to clear the low shelf of weed-covered rocks. One of his feet caught in the tough, slimy sea-weed, and in the jerk his victim was flung from his arms, and he himself fell violently forward, striking his head as he fell, and rolling helplessly into the sea.

Fortunately for Pearl Pendennis she could swim, and her first natural impulse, on finding herself in the water and free, was to strike out and keep herself afloat.

The voice of her lover sounded reassuringly upon her ears.

"Keep up, Pearl, I am coming," he shouted, and soon after she heard the dip of oars.

Rosemullion's quick eye had caught sight of Polthwait's boat and he had made for that directly he had heard the fisherman's awful threat. A few vigorous strokes brought him to Pearl's side, and then, not without much peril to both of them, he drew her into the boat and she lay down in the bottom more dead than alive, while he rowed to the nearest place of safety upon the shore.

Before they landed, however, help had come to Gilbert Polthwait.

But it came too late. When he was dragged out of the water it was found that life was quite extinct.

Despite his oath he had died alone.

There was a quiet wedding the next day, for the bridegroom pleaded that there need be no delay, but the bride was very pale and nervous and some of the intended festivities to the Rosemullion tenantry had to be postponed until the bride and bridegroom should return from their honeymoon.

But happiness soon chased away the clinging horror that had seemed to fasten upon Pearl when Gilbert sprang with her into the sea, and when she came back to Rosemullion, where old David and his wife had been invited to meet her, she looked as bonny as any bride need be.

It is strange how even the secrets of the sea are sometimes unfolded.

Pearl had been a wife for two whole years, and she was dandling her baby boy upon her knee one afternoon when Miss Tansey came into the room with an expression of great importance upon her wrinkled face.

She had grown to love Pearl very dearly, and their all living together in the old house had not turned out to be such a mistake as people had prophesied it would be.

"My dear, I have a piece of news for you," said the old lady, in such a tone that Pearl looked up in startled surprise.

"News, for me?" she asked.

"Yes, I have found out who your people were, and also I have discovered that you are heiress to a large fortune."

In an instant the infant heir of the Rosemullions was deposited upon the floor, and Pearl was holding Miss Tansey by the hand, eagerly entreating her to say if either of her parents were alive.

The old lady shook her head sadly as she said:

"No, my dear, they perished in the storm from which you were saved."

After this Pearl listened quietly and calmly. The hope she had cherished for years was shattered. Divested of Miss Tansey's method of telling it, her story was to this effect:

She had seen an advertisement in a morning paper for the heir-at-law of John and Edith Furnival, who with their infant daughter were lost in the ship "Pearl" off the Cornish coast some twenty years previously.

The name of the vessel, the date, and the coast had struck the old lady forcibly, and she had recognised the name of the lawyer to whom communications were to be addressed as that of an old friend of her own.

So she wrote to him, a correspondence ensued, and he was coming to Rosemullion this very day to see Pearl and old David Pengelly.

"And Pearl will have a fortune of thirty thousand pounds," said Miss Tansey, triumphantly.

"But my father and mother are dead," said Pearl, sadly.

Her husband, who had come into the room during the conversation, caught up his infant son in his arms, gave the boy to his mother, and himself embraced both as he said, a trifle reproachfully:

"Ungrateful Pearl, to be sad when she has so many to love her."

Whereupon Pearl tried to smile through her tears.

Happy as she was she still could scarce help weeping at the thought that the dream of her life, the hope of being clasped in her parents' arms, could never now be realized.

When the lawyer came, a few hours later, he quite confirmed Miss Tansey's story, and proved that Pearl Pendennis, the waif from the sea, was the wealthy heiress.

"Your real name was Edith Furnival," said the lawyer as he looked at the fair young matron.

"I think it will always be Pearl Rosemullion," she replied, with a smile, "and those who knew me before I was married will always think of me as Pearl Pendennis." J. F.-W.

FATE OR FOLLY;

OR,

AN ILL-OMENED MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FORGIVEN.

SIR HERBERT was being caught in the toils of a patient and scheming woman. Lady Elaine bided her time, remembering, perhaps, the old adage that "everything comes to one who waits," and her advances had been so skilful that he scarcely perceived them. She was so artful that in assuming innocence none could ever perceive it was merely put on for a purpose.

How pleasant it also is to receive consolation from a fair woman's words and looks and to find all the old wounds are healing by degrees. He was not going to be a poor man either, no sacrifice of any kind was needed, the past had been delusive and very sweet, but there had been a painful ending, affections and memories uprooted and buried in decent graves, and now fresh bright flowers were beginning to grow over them and all was peace. Lady Elaine never alluded to Clarice, she had vanished mysteriously and was quite out of her world. Clarice had sprung from the people she understood, and, with no birth to speak of, had been pushed into positions wholly unsuited to her—so, indeed, every one said.

On this sultry summer evening Lady Elaine, for a wonder, took it into her head to wander alone down by the sea beach of Shelgate, a seaport with charming inland scenery, where they were at present staying.

She was very anxious to bring her lover to the point. Would Sir Herbert propose?

He gave her flowers and sentimental verses which she loathed, but he had not yet offered her his hand. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" she knew, and Lady Elaine was by nature practical and desired to hold her lover by a bond.

She was very pretty in her small, piquant way, but, better than all, she was the emblem of the social and political success he meant to gain. Hence, when he resolved to follow her on to the beach and learn her decision, it was not dreams of passionate love and an adorable little girl that filled his thoughts, but visions of the future, when position would be far more to him than either.

Lady Elaine saw him coming down the uneven stone steps leading to the beach, and smiled towards him—that wonderfully caressing smile of hers that really meant nothing beyond a self-admiring stumper, but which yet turned men's heads, men who were undesirable, however, to contemplate as husbands and who looked upon marriage as a speculation.

"Alone?" he said, as he joined her, and realised that the hour had come which must decide all. But this was not love; something very different and far more sensible.

"It's a delicious hour for a ramble by the seashore," she said, conscious that she wore her most fascinating seaside costume.

It was a satin pompadour, elaborately trimmed with saffron-coloured lace and hat to match, and Lady Elaine was one of those convenient women, a daylight beauty, who looks better in conventional morning attire than in full evening dress under the glow of waxen lights.

"I am glad you are alone," Sir Herbert said, meaningly, "it was difficult to find you disengaged one moment when all those friends were staying with you, but now, Elaine, surely you can guess my reason for seeking you. you have read the story I have come to tell—the old story called Love?"

It was the love that subsides into friendship very quickly with contact and possession. It was but a shadow of the real mystery, but it was the best he had to offer, and she appeared satisfied.

Lady Elaine would have felt wearied with extravagant raptures and pathos. She liked to feel cool and at her ease as she did now. But the glance he shot into her pale blue eyes slightly confused her senses, for she misinterpreted it. It was prompted solely by ambition. She flattered herself it was a lover's passion, and passion, unlike fashion, was a new realm for the Lady Elaine's imagination to revel in—it dazzled her.

"Will she throw me over?" thinks Sir Herbert, foreseeing a future strictly limited to the mild delights of an attaché's career, or secretaryship, if Lady Elaine should prove cool, and he has begun to mistrust women. He has lost faith in everything. Led now entirely by his reason, life is a long calculation.

"Do you care for me then?" she asked, a doubt entering her mind, but she overruled it at once.

"I think you are my ideal of womanly grace and refinement," he said, earnestly, "and my love is not a frivolous protest, Elaine. It will be deeper and more lasting than mere vows."

He had gained possession of her hand by this time, and the sun was going down over the sea in a blaze of splendour as they lingered on the beach. Little waves caressed the shore, and the lace-like foam of the receding tide shone with a myriad delicate reflections of strange colours—it was a scene of poetry and beauty. But the one thought of ambition and the other of artificial restraint and social dignity.

"And you love me," she said, with a faint, almost shivering sigh, as if love were a descent already—something vulgar and plebeian.

She wanted to hear his confession—to be quite sure he was sincere.

Sir Herbert for answer did not commit himself by words, he bent down and kissed her marble brow.

Lady Elaine was for once natural, and so startled out of her usual restraint that she blushed.

He was sure she was the very woman for a wife, one with whom his honour would be safe and sacred, whose influence must act on any man like a moral strait-waistcoat.

"Will you be my wife, dearest Elaine?" he pleaded—a second time choosing a wealthy woman. But he knew they would never be any nearer each other's hearts than now; whereas, cool as had been the commencement of that other wooing, it had ended in a lover's ardour and worship, while Clarice had adored him by force of his love. Poor Clarice! She had sinned past all forgiveness, and the sweet dream was over, but her memory still brought an uncomfortable pang.

Lady Elaine had not quite got over the shock of that embrace. It was the first time any man's lips had pressed her brow, her suitors strictly limiting themselves to the honour of attacking her fair hand. Still she certainly liked Sir Herbert—gentlemanly and high-bred; clever, too, in an eager, restless way she could not understand. She preferred him for a partner for life to any whom she had yet seen.

The little word "Yes," muttered in a faint voice, gently reassured him, and he found her really pretty in her blushes and bewilderment.

The point was gained, and the Lady Elaine would be his wife, and his future secured.

The Duke of Glenarm, who thought Sir Herbert a fine fellow, button-holed him in a very pleasant, paternal way, as Lady Elaine explained matters on their return.

"And of course you'll represent the county," said his grace, effusively, "and go in for a strong Parliamentary career, for which you are fitted by your natural gifts. I never could speak myself, but I have my views, which I've no doubt you will enter into."

And Sir Herbert felt almost happy. He was soothed, appreciated, and safe in every respect. His brain revelled in the intoxicating fumes of success and admiration, but his heart must be cold as ice for ever.

The Dowager Lady Tresilian wept tears of joy over the fair Elaine.

This was an ideal marriage, the fruition of every wish, and the trousseau would give them plenty to think over.

"It's a capital match for Bertie," said Rupert over the dinner-table, discussing the affair with Lillian. "Lady Elaine will have a splendid fortune, and he will stand for the county."

But Lillian sighed, thinking of Clarice in her loneliness.

It seemed almost selfish and cruel of a man to accept consolation so readily, but it is their nature. What says the old adage?

"Men have died and worms have eaten them, but never of love."

And "out of sight out of mind" holds good in many cases where women alone are loyal.

Disappointed ambition, a sense of failure, and general insignificance and neglect will worry men to death far sooner than a woman's loss. For the former means self-denial, while the latter can be replaced.

While they were thus all making merry at the duke's pretty villa at Shelgate, Clarice was sitting in the lamp-light by Dudley's bedside, nursing him through all the fitful and alarming changes of a terrible fever.

He was delirious and only recognised her at intervals.

A crisis would take place as soon as the delirium left, and on that crisis would his life depend.

Hour after hour she listened to those fragmentary ravings, and time enough had she to reflect on the fatal results of that ill-omened marriage.

Should he ultimately recover in all probability he would be a cripple for life—very likely dependent on her for his existence and support.

She had lost all love for him, but an all-pervading sense of pity for his sufferings took possession of her; his premeditated treachery in entrapping her to her own ruin seemed less cruel as she saw him convulsed by pain.

Dudley woke towards midnight, calm and sane.

She knew that he recognised her by the strange gleam in his eyes—they had lost that awful vacancy, and looked soft and pleading. He was ashen pale, and his features sunken; the grey hair tossed from his brow, and the mouth drooping at the corners with utter weakness. He tried to stretch out his hand.

"Clarice," he whispered, in a low, hoarse voice.

She rose and bent over him.

The critical moment had arrived on which his life hung.

"You have been very ill," she said, gently; "and you must try and keep quiet for the present."

She had begun to pour out some wine in a glass, and her hand trembled so she could hardly steady it sufficiently. Dudley watching her with those large mournful eyes so long blinded and closed spoke again.

"Am I in an hospital?" he said, gazing blankly around. "What an end!"

"Drink this," said Clarice, putting her arm under him, "and try to sleep."

"What o'clock is it?" asked Dudley, swal-

lowing the wine and turning restlessly on his pillow.

"Twelve o'clock," answered Clarice, dreading an appearance of those bad symptoms prophesied by the physician.

"And how is it, child, you're here?" he next asked, touching the sleeve of her gown.

"What's given you a taste for the doleful?"

"You know," she faltered.

"Then he gave you up, I suppose. You've made a bad thing of it between us all, my poor Clarice, but you were fated to be somebody's victim."

Spite of her efforts the tears rose to her eyes. This was the voice that had wooed and flattered her when she had been a young and innocent girl—always weak and fancying herself a sort of heroine of romance.

"And yet I'm sorry for you, child," the dreadful murmur went on, unspeakably awful in the silence of an hospital in the centre of a great city, "for I destroyed your life."

She bowed her head—it was all so true. But no feverish resentment or sense of injury lingered. His treachery was no excuse for hers—she who had deceived and been abandoned.

"Hush," she said, alarmed at his excitement, "you must not talk so. You must try and be calm."

"D've think I want to live and find myself a cripple?" he said, bitterly, and passionate pain in his face and tone. "No, my girl, never—the game's up. Fate has dogged me to the very end, it's always dragged me back at the eleventh hour. Ah, me! what an insatiable blood-sucker is fate."

A spasm of anguish passed over Clarice's face—in that fitful light this gray-bearded, hollow-eyed man seemed scarcely human, and even yet he spoke with all his old laughing bitterness and scorn, defiant to the end.

"I don't think I shall get over it—people often die as they have lived," he went on, after swallowing more wine and a little fruit. "But I should like to know you're forgiven me, Clarice; don't let us part in anger at the last."

"No, not anger," she faltered, "life's too intense a tragedy for us both for that, Dudley."

"Bate the silent land,
On! who shall lead us thither?"

I forgive you, Dudley, from my very heart."

She wound her arms round him and kissed him kindly. These scenes are among the strange anomalies of life, but he was miserable, forsaken, and dying, and it is sometimes those who have mortally wounded us we are called on at the last to pity and forgive—as in this case.

"I've been a brute," he said, hurriedly, "I won't deny it."

He understood that she was destroyed, and that he was in a measure her murderer.

"And yet things were beginning to look a bit brighter for me," he went on, dreamily, "I made money abroad, I'd come over to England to invest it, when, meeting some old friends in the city, they all stood me a drink, and so, not seeing so clearly as I ought, I got knocked down and run over."

After this he was silent for some time, and seemed inclined to doze.

On awaking from a restless slumber Clarice gave him the medicine prescribed, and he sank off to sleep again.

Fatigue also began to overpower Clarice—her eyes closed from sheer exhaustion, and she slept for an hour or so undisturbed.

(To be Continued.)

The largest lathe in the world has just been erected at the St. Chamond Steelworks, in the Department of the Loire. It is destined for the turning of 100-ton guns. This fine piece of machinery was supplied by Sir Joseph Whitworth and Co., of Manchester, for no French maker could be found to supply it at anything like the price, or time of delivery, offered by that firm.



[THE MYSTERY SOLVED.]

THE ROMANCE OF RYDALL PLACE.

AUBREY DEANE was always like a brother, and he was so regarded by my sister Gertie and myself, in our earlier years, although he was not even a distant relative.

I have an indistinct recollection of his being brought to my father's house by a stranger, who left a considerable sum of money and a sealed package—the latter to be kept until Aubrey was twenty-one years old, when it was to be given to him; in the meantime he was not to know of its existence.

The money was to be spent in giving him an education; when he was twenty-one he would find himself provided for. Who he was or whence he came was left a mystery. Aubrey was five, just Gertie's age, and two years younger than myself, and I at once assumed the guardianship and guardianship of both.

Rydall Place was a grand old manor, comprising hundreds of acres, that lay adjoining my ancestral home. Its huge stone mansion, surrounded by stately elms and maples, had been tenanted for years—the Rydalls, in spite of all their wealth, had been unhappy, the family was broken and scattered. While visiting in Scotland, the only daughter had married beneath her station, no one seemed to know whom, since

her haughty relatives never deigned to mention his name.

She never returned to her ancestral roof, and was never again known to those who knew her in her childhood. With the laughter and smiles of Mary Rydall gone out of Rydall Mansion, the sunlight seemed to have taken its departure too.

In a year or two the gray stone mansion was closed, and Squire Rydall and his wife and son went abroad. Two years later, and the news came back that both the squire and his wife were dead, and that Guy Rydall had determined to spend his life abroad; and Rydall Place was put in the hands of an agent to be leased.

Years passed, and there was no tenant in Rydall Place. The trees bloomed, the fruit ripened, and the seasons came and went; but there was the desolate silence of the wilderness throughout the grand old manor. The place soon got the reputation of being haunted, and the simple country folk grew shy of it.

A year after Aubrey had been added to our home circle it was given out that a tenant had been found for Rydall Place. "Who?" inquired all the neighbours and villagers. The agent could not fully answer the question. He only knew that Deidrick Ryerson was the name of the prospective occupant. Further than that he knew nothing—or, at least, revealed nothing.

For almost a week carts and waggons went back and forth between the mansion and the railway, removing carefully packed and covered

furniture, immense boxes, and things without number.

The Ryersons were wealthy—that everyone could see, but further than that the most astute were doomed to disappointment. The family at last arrived, with a large retinue of servants. Some of them were evidently persons of refinement, and all of them conversed in a foreign tongue. When the cartmen and the teamsters offered to unpack the goods and arrange them in their proper places, their well-meant offers were abruptly declined, and after being paid handsomely for their services they were dismissed, in a manner that even the dullest of them could comprehend as a request to keep away from Rydall Place for all time to come.

The neighbours flocked to greet the newcomers and make them welcome, as was the custom, but they met with a strange reception. While not absolutely rejected, each one understood that his or her absence was preferable to his or her company. They met a tall, pale gentleman, somewhat bowed and prematurely grey; a delicate lady with a beautiful face, but one marked with sadness, and a blue-eyed, golden-haired girl of five or six summers.

The servants were a curious lot, and, like their master and mistress, betrayed their foreign lineage. To the callers they spoke in broken English, but to themselves they spoke in some language unknown to the natives, but which was interpreted to be either Flemish or Dutch.

Mr. and Mrs. Ryerson spoke English well, with a foreign accent, while the child spoke English like a native, and the foreign tongue with equal fluency.

"We came here for seclusion," said Mr. Ryerson, "and we shall not bother our neighbours."

This was invariably repeated to every caller, and the manner in which it was said left no doubt in the mind that the strangers did not want to be bothered by their neighbours.

As I still remember it, ours were a peculiar people. The singular rebuff that they received was philosophically taken, and by common consent the Ryersons were left alone in their glory and solitude. No one thought it necessary to inquire after them, or even feel very curious as to who or what they were. They were regarded as proud or crazy, or both, and our little community ignored them quite as entirely as they ignored the community.

Year after year passed away, and no member of the household ever left the manor. The servants went to the village and the railway when necessity required, but otherwise they, too, kept themselves secluded. Once a year the head servant—or so he appeared to be—went to the agent of Rydall Place and paid the annual rental. He also superintended the purchase of family supplies, which showed that the hermits, as they were frequently called, knew the pleasures of good living. Where the money came from no one could conjecture. There was never a shilling's worth sold or exchanged from the manor. The Ryerson revenue must come from some mysterious source.

Every year, just before settling with the agent, "Old Clam"—the only name by which the steward or head waiter was known—went away, and returned after an absence of a week or ten days. Of course it was agreed that these excursions were to some hidden gold mine, and this idea was strengthened by the fact that he was always met on his return at the station with a close carriage, and two servants beside the driver. Whatever of baggage he had was carefully carried and placed inside the carriage, and the three sat guard over it.

The Ryersons were a mysterious family; that much was quite clear. There were all kinds of conjectures about them, and strange stories were told of their mysterious doings.

Ever and anon the old man was to be seen strolling about the grounds of the manor, with gun and dogs, and usually accompanied by a servant. The braying of dogs and the discharge of fire arms might be heard almost every day.

No visitors ever came and inquired for the Ryersons, nor had a letter ever come to or been sent by them through the village post-office, although more than ten years had passed since they came to Rydall Place. The community at last settled down to the belief that Ryerson was a murderer, either in heart or act. He had grown to be a terror to all the youngsters in the community.

The manor was a perfect wilderness of fruit and nuts in their season, and running through it were three or four streams that were alive with fish. What was more natural than that the youngsters should poach where so much went to waste? But poaching was admitted to be dangerous, for there were not wanting plenty of instances in which Ryerson or some of his servants had fired on the intruders. At least they had heard fire arms in their immediate vicinity while they were helping themselves to the bounties of the manor.

So far as Aubrey, Gertie and myself were concerned, we knew the danger from experience. We were a trio of wonderful fishers, and whipped the brooks regularly. The brooks on Rydall Place were famous for their fish, and many a fine basket did we secure clandestinely. We didn't more than half believe the stories of old Ryerson shooting people, but we encouraged the belief, since it would guard the brooks from the intrusion of others.

Still we never showed ourselves openly, and kept as far away from the mansion as possible, and thus out of sight. But immunity made us reckless, until finally we ventured along under the grassy banks within a hundred yards of the mansion.

One day I remember that we had gone far down the stream and were having famous luck, and had snared almost a hundred shining beauties. Keeping carefully under the bank and laughing to ourselves, we were in a Paradise of sport.

Suddenly we heard the movements of some animal on the bank above us, followed by the short, sharp bark of a dog. The next instant there was the deafening roar of fire arms, and a woodcock fluttered down on Gertie's head and fell dead at her feet. Poor Gertie uttered a piercing scream and fell lifeless, to all appearances.

Abandoning our fish and fishing tackle, Aubrey and I picked Gertie up in our arms and started to run with her. Glancing over our shoulders we saw a white-haired old man gesticulating wildly, and heard him shouting to us. This only added to our fright, and we sped away under the elms and oaks at a speed that must have been marvellous, considering the burden that we bore between us. Nor did we slacken our pace until we reached the fence that divided Rydall Place from my father's grounds. In some way that neither of us could ever recall, we got Gertie over the fence, and laid her down on the soft grass, under a spreading maple. Blood was trickling from her face and bare arms and hands, while she was as pale as a dead person.

Aubrey dashed away to the spring and brought his hat full of water, which he sprinkled in her face. Her bosom heaved convulsively. Her blue eyes opened, and she sat upright.

"Oh, boys, are you both alive?" she exclaimed, looking about her with terror. "Where am I? How did we get here? Did he pursue us?" followed in quick succession.

We explained matters to her briefly, and then insisted on carrying her home.

"I am not hurt so badly as I thought," she said, "and I can walk well enough. But where are the fish?"

"I suppose that old Blue Beard is taking them home, and the rods and lines along with them," said Aubrey, ruefully.

"Well, that is too bad!" replied Gertie. "Just to think what a nice lot of fish we have lost, and our best rods and lines along with them."

"So far as I am concerned I don't mind the loss, so you weren't killed," I returned.

"Don't let us stand here talking," urged Aubrey. "We had better get Gertie home,

and send for the doctor. We don't know how many shot struck her; and maybe the old Hessian will come up and pop away at us again, even if we are on our own grounds."

The bare suggestion sent us off on a trot, Aubrey and I supporting Gertie on either side. Our arrival at home was the signal for a grand uproar. One of the men was soon dashing away for the village physician, while mother had the hysterics over our narrow escape.

As for Gertie, she could not tell just how badly she was hurt, and declared that when the gun went off it "seemed to hit her all over," and that was the last she knew until she came to on the safe side of the fence. Father was not at home and did not return for a month, and then he concluded not to take any action against Ryerson unless he again committed some overt act. He was not lacking in moral or personal courage, but dreaded to get into a controversy with a neighbour.

The doctor came and made a careful examination of the wounded Gertie, and, much to our surprise and relief, he decided that not a single shot had taken effect. The blood on her face and arms resulted from the scratches of briars and thorns, as she had been borne from the field of assault.

We told the story as connectedly as we could, and had to acknowledge that we had been poaching on the Rydall brooks, contrary to the orders of our parents. When we told of the rush of the dog, the almost simultaneous shot, and the fluttering down of the woodcock on Gertie's head, the doctor and mother exchanged meaning glances, and they seemed to get an understanding of the matter that did not reach us. This, too, probably had something to do with father's refusal to take notice of the deadly assault. We were solemnly told, however, that we should take it as a warning, and never go poaching upon the manor again. Gertie never did; but Aubrey and I organised and executed many secret expeditions against the enemy, and carried off a great deal of spoil in the shape of fish and fruits and nuts.

Aubrey vowed never to forgive Ryerson for shooting at Gertie, for, of course, we assumed that he had attempted to kill all three of us.

On many occasions we saw the enemy at a goodly distance, and once or twice we saw a graceful, girlish figure by his side; but neither of us got a glimpse of her face. Even her name was unknown to the whole neighbourhood, and no one had ever seen her since the arrival of the family. She was "the Ryerson girl," and that was all, when she was referred to, and that was only when some one commiserated her lonely lot.

One day Aubrey had been wandering about the manor alone. He came back flushed and excited.

"I have learned her name," he said.

"Whose name?"

"Why, Ryerson's girl—I mean Miss Ryerson."

"And how did you learn it?"

"I was up along the chestnut slope where there is a quickset hedge—and on the opposite side were the old gentleman and the young lady. I could not see them, but I could hear them distinctly, for they were not two yards distant. I wouldn't have played eavesdropper for the world, if it had been anybody else, but with these people I don't think it matters so much. The old man didn't talk like a murderer, but was very kind-spoken and gentle in tone. He called her Margery, and there seemed to be a tone of sadness in his voice when he told her that it was not time yet for him to explain why they lived apart from all the rest of the world, and why she had no companions except those of her own household.

"I am old," he said, "and you are young. There is plenty of time for you to enjoy the companionship of others. It is but a little while until I shall be wrapped in endless solitude;" and then I heard her crying, and the old man was soothing and petting her."

From that hour there was a marked change in Aubrey Deane. That night, in our room, he

told me that he would never rest until he met Margery face to face.

"I have already fallen in love with her," he said.

In a week more he returned to college to finish his course—I having finished mine two years previously. I knew that he had been seeking for Margery Ryerson every day, and had failed to find her, although he never opened his lips.

In due time he graduated with high honours, and came back to his home. In half an hour after completing his greetings he was missing. Gertie and I knew where he had gone, for he had confided his secret to us both. Late in the evening he sauntered into the sitting-room, looking weary and disappointed.

Every day for a month the same thing was repeated. At last he came home one day with a strange light in his eyes, and joined Gertie and me under a broad elm that shadowed the western half of the lawn.

"I have met her at last," he said.

"And—"

"She is as beautiful as a dream."

"It must have been an adventure," exclaimed Gertie; "tell us all about it."

"Well, for a month I have been wandering about the manor, trying to meet her, but always failed. To-day it occurred to me that I was a man grown, and the manly way was to go direct to the mansion and call on them. To think was to act at once. I called at the mansion and was received, not exactly with a warm welcome, but with a courtly dignity, by the whole family. Both Mr. and Mrs. Ryerson seemed startled when they saw me, and when I gave them my name it did not reassure them much. But Margery was all smiles and beauty, and how such an angel could have been brought up in such an oppressive solitude I cannot understand. True—as I learned—among the household retinue are three or four teachers, refined ladies and gentlemen, so that she has not been so utterly destitute of companionship; but how they could be content to stay there is a great mystery to me. The old folks are not wicked—I know that—but they are certainly very sad about something or other. What I saw of the house is furnished like Aladdin's palace; there are paintings, statuary, tapestries and the like, in the most wonderful profusion. Margery, too, is an artist and one of her pictures is so life-like that you couldn't help but recognise it."

"What is it?"

"Two boys carrying a little girl between them in the foreground, while in the distance is an old man with a gun in his hand."

"Oh, they must all be very wicked!" exclaimed Gertie. "That is a picture of the shooting."

"I didn't know what to think when I saw the picture in the parlour, so I bluntly told Mr. Ryerson—in the absence of Margery and her mother—that I was one of the figures in it, and that I had always thought there had been an attempt to murder. A look of deep pain came over his face, and then he told me at length all about it. His sole amusement for the past fifteen years has been to shoot game about the manor. That day he was hunting woodcock, and was wholly unaware that we were fishing along the brook. His dog flushed a bird almost over our heads, and he shot it. When he saw us running so frantically he wanted to explain to us, but we would not stop and listen. Just then Margery came in again and confirmed the story, and I believe it. She saw it all, and made it the subject of a picture. But, to make a long story short, I asked permission to call again, and also to take you two and your father and mother."

"And what did Blue Beard say?"

"Don't call him Blue Beard any more, Gertie. He is a kindly, sorrow-burdened old man, whom we have all misunderstood. He hesitated for a moment, and then said that I might call again to-morrow and hear some things that he had to say, and then if I felt like visiting them in the future and bringing my friends with me, I

might do so. I am to call at two to-morrow afternoon."

"The mystery deepens," said Gertie, half laughingly and half seriously.

An hour later Mr. Hovey, George Rydall's agent, called at the house to say that he had just received word that George Rydall was dead. He had fallen over a precipice in the Swiss Alps, and had been dashed to pieces.

"If Mary Rydall or her children are living," said Mr. Hovey, "the estate will go to them, as George died unmarried and intestate. But Mary has never been heard from, and she cannot probably be found, even if living. But I shall advertise for her or her heirs at once."

Just after the lamps had been lighted father came into the library with a dusty package of papers in his hand.

"Aubrey Deane," he said, in a rather constrained voice, "sixteen years ago to-day you were brought to this house by a stranger who said that it was your fifth birthday. He gave me this package, to be delivered to you on the day you were twenty-one years old. It will doubtless tell you more about yourself than any of us know. I would advise you to go to your room alone and break the seal. If it contains a secret that you would not care to have known, no one will press you to reveal it."

Aubrey took it and hurried upstairs, and we all sat in perfect silence. The very existence of this package had been unknown to Gertie and myself. We were quite prepared for a mystery, after having heard Aubrey's recital, and we were prepared to wonder but not to be startled at whatever might happen. Aubrey's room was directly overhead, and presently we heard him walking with rapid strides up and down. He would pause for a moment, and then resume his walking. The four of us sat there, our suspense greatly deepened from the fact that none of us spoke, and there was nothing to divert our minds.

At length we heard Aubrey coming slowly down the stairs, and when he entered the door we were startled at his pale and changed features and his wild looks. He had in his hands several open papers.

"I know who I am," he began, in a husky voice, "and I know who my ancestors were. Two hours ago the news brought by Mr. Hovey merely excited my curiosity. Ten minutes ago I learned that it made me sole master of Rydall Place and all of its broad acres."

We grouped around him with ejaculations of surprise.

"Nor is that all; for I learned that I have a fortune in the Bank of London that would ransom a king—twenty-five thousand pounds at compound interest for seventeen years!"

It began to sound like a story out of the Arabian Nights, and we all congratulated him.

"And I learned"—his voice was deep and he almost choked—"I learned that Deidrick Ryerson killed my father."

Gertie screamed hysterically and dropped into an easy-chair, while Aubrey hastened to say:

"But I do not think he was to blame. I think I have learned to-night all that Deidrick Ryerson intended to tell me to-morrow; and as to Rydall Place, probably more than he knows. But these papers will best explain the whole matter," said he, handing them to my father. "Please read them aloud, sir."

Father read them in the order that they were marked—one, two, three—as follows:—

"TO MY SON, AUBREY DEANE:—

"I am dying from a pistol shot received in a duel. Herr Deidrick Ryerson, of the Prussian Legation, was my antagonist. He was not to blame, and it is my request that you hold him and his blameless. An enemy of mine, whom I supposed to be a friend, falsified Herr Ryerson, and accused him of casting reflections upon your mother's name. I challenged him, and refused to listen to any explanation. We met, and I fired with intent to kill him. His own pistol accidentally exploded, and inflicted upon me a mortal wound. I know that he had no intention of firing, although he would

have been justified in so doing. We have talked the matter over, and I die knowing that Herr Ryerson is innocent of my death. Should you ever meet him or his, treat him as a friend and not as an enemy. My son, I leave you nothing but my love and blessing. Your mother survives me. Love and cherish her, and that God will bless you both is the dying wish of

Your father,

"June 2, 1841.

"AETHRE DEANE."

"Bank of London,

"July 21, 1841.

"THIS is to certify that Deidrick Ryerson, a member of the Prussian Legation to the French Government, has this day deposited to the credit of Aubrey Deane, son of Arthur Deane (deceased) and Mary Rydall Deane, twenty-five thousand pounds, to be paid when the said Aubrey Deane shall attain the age of twenty-one years, upon presentation of this certificate and proof of identity, with interest at five per cent. compounded semi-annually until payable, and thereafter simple interest only until paid.

"ELWOOD THOMPSON, Manager.

"CONDITION:—If the said Aubrey Deane does not survive his twenty-first birthday, then the above sum of money becomes payable, with the interest thereon, to Deidrick Ryerson, his heirs, or assignees. "ELWOOD THOMPSON."

"MY DEAR MR. AND MRS. MARTINDALE,—

"My husband died a year ago in the manner set forth in his statement, enclosed. To-day the hand of death is on me. I entrust my son to your keeping, without revealing to you the secret of his identity. When you read this he will have grown to manhood, and I know he will have learned to love you as though you were his own parents, and I know that you will be a father and a mother to my darling. My people have cast me off, and I die an exile and alone, although not in want. My husband was poor, but proud and spirited. This led to the fatal encounter which terminated his life. Against my protests Herr Ryerson has made provision for my boy and for me. The thousand pounds that were placed in your hands came from him, and he made me agree to take that much each year of my life. I will soon be released from taking his bounty. I freely forgive him for all the part he took in the sad accident that led to Arthur's death.

"The enclosed certificate will be Aubrey's fortune. Teach him to spend it well and wisely. Go with him to Rydall Place after you learn his identity. I hope he will bring back some of the old-time joy to the dear old mansion and its beautiful surroundings.

"If mother or father or George are living when this is read, I want Aubrey to show them this, and ask them to forgive him for my sake and for the sake of happy memories.

"My darling boy, God bless and shield you!

"MARY RYDALL DEANE.

"May 23, 1842."

For a few moments there were tears and sobs and congratulations intermingled, while manly tears stole down Aubrey's cheeks for the father and mother who had spoken to him from the grave. Memory went back to his childhood, and he could faintly recall his parents, but their existence to him was but a faint impression.

There remains little else to tell. Aubrey kept his promise and called at Rydall Place the next day. Herr Ryerson asked Margery to withdraw.

"No, no!" interposed Aubrey. "Let her stay. I read my father's and mother's letters last night, and know all. You need not ask me to forgive you, for there is nothing to forgive. Still my father and mother told me that."

Margery sat still with open-eyed wonder, for it was all a secret to her.

"Tell us both the whole story," said Aubrey. "We both ought to hear it to help us to a perfect understanding."

Then Herr Ryerson recited this brief story:—"I was secretary of the Prussian Legation at Paris, where I met and became acquainted with your father and mother. Your father held some position in the department of State which threw

us frequently together, and we became warm friends. But a mutual enemy pretending to be the friend of both came between us. He was an adventurer named Le Clercq. In a short time he estranged us, and finally poisoned your father's mind with the grossest lies, which brought on the challenge. Then I determined not to fire at him.

"The seconds put the pistols ready cocked in our hands. After your father fired, slightly wounding me, I lowered the pistol, but the pain of my wound probably made me nervous, and I touched the hair-trigger when it was in a fatal position, and your father fell, mortally wounded, and died in my arms four days later—for Le Clercq had confessed his villainy, and fled when he saw the result of it. I resigned my position and returned home, after making ample provisions for your mother and yourself. But there was no rest or peace for me.

"I had once visited this place, and it seemed to me that I might enjoy existence, even if happiness did not come to me. I met George Rydall, the owner, abroad, and took a long lease on it, for it seemed that some private sorrow had driven him from home to seek rest. The fortune that I inherited enabled me to command anything I wanted.

"I brought with me tutors and companions for my wife and daughter, and servants who were entire strangers to the neighbourhood. I have endeavoured to pay them enough to make their solitude endurable, but I doubt not they have found it dreary enough. But now it seems to me we can break the solitude. The weight of almost twenty years of sorrow is nearly gone. When you came yesterday you seemed to be your father, risen from the grave, so nearly do you resemble him."

During the recital Margery had crept to her father's side, and, with her arms about his neck, her tears rained down upon his snowy hair.

"Then the mansion will be opened again?" said Aubrey, interrogatively.

"Yes, if we can induce enough young and happy hearts to come hither," replied Herr Ryerson.

"Well, we will answer for that," replied Aubrey, with a glance at Margery, whose face flushed with joy at the prospect of youthful companionship—or something else.

"Herr Ryerson," said Aubrey. "I have here a certificate for twenty-five thousand pounds, which must be almost trebled by this time, and which you will please permit me to return to you."

"No, no, keep it. You deserve such a fortune, and I do not need it and you do, for your father was unhappily without means."

"That may be; but I have a handsome competence withal. My mother, Mary Rydall Deane, was the only daughter of this noble mansion. News just reached the village to-day that George Rydall, my uncle, is dead. That leaves me master of Rydall Place."

This new branch of Aubrey's ancestral tree took even Herr Ryerson by surprise, and Margery's face paled and flushed alternately. But still the old gentleman refused to take back the certificate of deposit.

All Elmwood and its surroundings were in a furor long before sunset. Herr Ryerson's servants were at every house—among the rich and poor, high and low, alike—with written invitations to come to Rydall Mansion and spend a social evening. Aubrey had furnished the list of names, and none were forgotten—and, more than that, no one refused the invitation; curiosity alone would have dragged them out.

Surprise followed surprise. From the grand reception room the guests were taken to the dining-hall, resplendent with plate and ancient china, and feasted to their hearts' content. The gray stone mansion was lighted up from basement to turret, and the wondering people went from room to room, inspecting the wonderful carpets, rich furniture and costly adornments, such as they had read about in books but never expected to see.

It was a nine days' wonder in Elmwood, but

the whole story at last came out as a sort of a climax to all the other wonders.

All were prepared, therefore, to hear that Aubrey and Margery were to be married, which event took place during the Christmas holidays. Herr Ryerson persisted in refusing to take back the certificate, so Aubrey Deane compromised by making a wedding present of it to Margery.

W. A. T.

HINTS ABOUT BATHING.

To rush to either extreme is dangerous, and children who are "coddled" are always delicate; but no wise mother will put her young children into quite cold water in winter time, nor with a cold, and, above all, will never allow them to be washed and bathed in a draught, on the same principle of consistency that plenty of fresh air is good when it is not damp or foggy, but draughts are most injurious. Even in summer the chill should be taken off the water in which children or delicate persons are bathed, while in winter it is doubtful whether even the strongest man is benefited by bathing in water at or but little above the freezing point.

The cold bath is not advisable when followed by no warm glow; neither when followed by a rush of blood to the head—in both of which cases tepid or warm water should be substituted. There live many men (and women too) "with souls so dead" that they will go into a cold bath, or send their children, when they have some feverish or eruptive complaint. The danger of this should be obvious—that the disease receives a most violent check, and the person's life is even threatened.

If, however, you persist in the use of cold water for yourself or children, succeeded by no necessary after-glow of warmth, and will not have the common sense to use warm or tepid water, then put a tablespoonful of spirit of some sort into your bath—whiskey is good, though eau de cologne or spirits of wine is best—and you will have your glow. This often prevents chilblains in persons of slow circulation.

On the other hand, it is injurious to many people to have the water approaching even too hot. Those who bathe regularly the year round in cool water are rarely sensitive to cold, and the most delicate women may use the sponge bath daily, not only with impunity, but with advantage. To do this immersion is not necessary, and no one need complain that one cannot have "a good wash," because one does not happen to possess a bath, for this may be easily accomplished after Miss Nightingale's plan, in the rules she laid down for her lady nurses who accompanied her to the Crimea; even if they had but the poor accommodation of a basin, they were to thoroughly sponge themselves from "top to toe," which is possible to the poorest of us.

Those who take cold from bathing often do so not from the bath itself but from the contact of the bare feet with the metal bottom of the bath tub. This may be avoided by doubling a towel to stand on during the bath, and an abundant sponge bath may thus be taken easily without risk.

Authorities all agree that cold water is the best of cosmetics, and those who wish for good complexions can employ no better means to that end than the daily bath. Besides this, nothing so conduces to health and comfort in warm weather. Taken just before going to bed it frequently insures a good night's rest; taken on rising in the morning it gives a feeling of freshness for the labours of the day. Sea salt, cologne, etc., add much to the luxury of the bath, and one need but read of the ancient Romans to learn how far luxuriousness may go in this direction.

That the bath may be thoroughly beneficial the body should be well dried afterward. Some only half do it, and jump into their clothes quite damp, which is very injurious, leaving the crevices and crannies full of moisture. With young children, and people with fine and

delicate skins, this often results in a soreness, which becomes painful and troublesome, therefore the urgent necessity of conscientiously drying each crevice and cranny aforesaid. This is soon accomplished, and like a good housemaid, who knows where dust and dirt most easily congregate, you quickly find out where the water, or even moisture, lodges longest.

In the case of little children, for whom soft towels are best, and whose tender skins will not bear hard rubbing, we recommend a little finely powdered white starch, and where there is soreness of the skin in the little fat creases of the body, from inattention, a slight dusting of pulverized nutmeg added to the starch, and rubbed softly or sprinkled on with the fingers, will soon heal it.

LOVE'S SPINNING.

Love sat spinning a web one day;
Spinning a web of the softest sheen,
So light and fair that a sprite of air
Its manifold threads could not pass between.

Love sat spinning; heigho! heigho!
Many a maid will that way go,
Nor think of the snare
That awaits her there,

Where Love his gossamer web is spinning!
There was a knot within the web;
A true-lover's-not, so strong and true
That Love himself, the saucy elf!
Could never the intricate tie undo.

Roguish fellow! his web he'll spin
Many a maid to catch therein,
With tangle and twist,
For they can't resist
The witching ways of the saucy fellow!

Love sat spinning a web one day;
Singing and spinning with skill and pride;
And flies were found in his meshes bound,
But the fly that he wanted still buzzed outside.

"Love is spinning; ah, well-a-day!
I'll not venture to go that way,"
Said the modest maid,
Of the web afraid,

That magical web that Love was spinning.

Twilight deepened; Love fell asleep;
And, quite forgetting her late alarms,
The maid drew near the web so sheer,
And, tripping, fell in her lover's arms.
Love woke smiling, and said, "Heigho
This is my sweetheart now, I know,
Thus caught unaware
In the crafty snare
That for love of her Love kept spinning!"
J. P.

STATISTICS.

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.—Last year there were 587 marriages celebrated in the churches throughout England, against 531 in 1878; 3,208 baptisms administered, against 3,277 in 1878; and 778 deaths recorded against 702 in the previous year.

THE LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD.—The number of different languages and dialects spoken in the known world is 2,623, of which 587 belong to Europe, 396 to Asia, 376 to Africa, and 1,264 to America.

FRENCH INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS.—In the factories and magazines of Paris more than 10,000 workwomen and close upon 3,000 workmen people the workshops, and receive for their labour in the same an annual sum of not less than 11,000,000 francs, which represents the amount

paid for hand labour, giving a daily wage of 3 francs a head. To state it in other words, the average earnings of the male sex is about 4 francs, while that of the female portion is about 2 francs 50 centimes. In regard to the latter, when it is stated that many of these are wives and mothers of families, and devote but their spare time taken from their home cares and duties, it may be readily imagined that the earnings of the French women engaged are of the most remunerative amongst those industries which are open to the females, who form at an early age an object of the employers' engagements.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SNIFE ON TOAST.—After dressing the birds fasten a paper-thin piece of fat bacon round the breast of each, and fry in boiling hot lard for two minutes. Sprinkle with pepper and salt, and serve each on a piece of toast.

CHICKEN CHEESE.—Boil two chickens till tender; take out all the bones, and chop the meat fine; season to taste with salt, pepper, and butter; pour in enough of the liquor they are boiled in to make moist. Mould it in any shape you choose, and when cold turn out and cut into slices. It is an excellent travelling lunch.

VELVET CREAM.—Dissolve half a box of gelatine in a coffee-cup of wine over the fire; add the juice and the grated peel of one lemon; when the gelatine has dissolved put in a coffee-cup of white sugar. Let it cook slowly, strain it and add one and one-half pints of rich milk; stir until it is cool, and then pour into a mould previously wetted.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THERE is a rumour that the Czar was marriedmorganatically to a lady of his Court a few weeks ago.

It is stated that the Duchess Dowager of Cleveland has given £1,000 towards the endowment fund of the bishopric of Newcastle.

To celebrate the centenary of the foundation of the great piano manufactory of the Rue du Mail, Mme. Erard has distributed 60,000 francs among her workmen.

The proposed tunnel through Mont Blanc is being seriously talked about in France, and the French Government have commissioned M. De Lepinaye to draw up a report on the scheme. The estimated cost is £3,600,000, and the extreme length would be about eight miles.

The Balloon Society of Great Britain has been formed, its principal object being to bring together members of the learned profession, scientific bodies, and practical aeronauts with a view to having observations made in different parts of the world wherever ascents take place, whether by means of captive or free balloons.

GOATS AS A SOURCE OF MILK SUPPLY.—At a recent meeting of the British Goat Society, held at its rooms, 6, Strand, a letter was read from Lord Rosslyn accepting the office of president of the institution. The honorary secretary, Mr. H. S. Holmes, said it was a well-established fact that in rural districts the families of the poor rarely tasted other than "skim" milk, in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining the pure article, which was either sent wholesale to London or utilised at once in butter or cheese making. He added that on the Continent and in Ireland the goat was regarded as the poor man's cow. The society claimed that the goat was especially adapted for such a purpose. It supplied just milk enough for the requirements of an ordinary household during the greater part of the year, and as it ate almost every kind of herb and vegetable, and possessed a hardy constitution, it was kept with very little trouble and at an almost nominal cost.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

INQUIRER—We make no charge for the insertion of advertisements in this page of the LONDON READER.

M. E.—Castor oil and brandy will promote the growth of the hair. The proportions are three ounces of oil and one ounce of brandy.

R. T.—To stain ivory black: Immerse the pieces in a weak solution of nitrate of silver for a short time, and then expose them to the sunlight.

K. S.—Any of the standard encyclopedias will give you information on silk culture, and also furnish you the names of many books on the subject.

D. Y.—Time is about the only thing that removes superfluous hair from the forehead so that it will not grow again. Wait patiently. The chances are that time will do its work, after all, sooner than will be agreeable to you, for when it once begins to remove the hair from the head it does not stop at the "superfluous."

L. T.—If a gentleman desires to make your acquaintance, you may be quite sure he will find the way to do so. It would be unwise on your part to make the slightest advance.

A. R.—The engagement-ring is usually worn on the third finger of the left hand—that is, the wedding-ring finger—though some ladies wear it on the forefinger of the same hand. 3. You were right not to reply to the letter, nor to take any notice of it.

T. M.—Blushing is as natural with the innocent as smiles or laughter. So do not be ashamed of the effusion. Those who do not and cannot blush have had their countenances polished by that artist in brass-worldliness—who, at any moment of our waking existence, is proffering his cold-hearted services.

T. D.—There are so many beasts and birds in the Gardens of the Zoological Society that cannot be kept alive without being fed daily on living fish that the agents of the society are permitted to catch fish in the fresh waters during the close season by virtue of a special provision in an Act of Parliament.

D. W.—About the only way is for you to keep on trying to improve yourself when in company. It is practice that makes perfect in this as well as in many other things. The more you go into company and the more you try to improve yourself in social intercourse, the more easy it will become for you to bear your part easily and gracefully in society.

E. W.—We have seen it stated that a good remedy for chapped hands can be made by mixing a quarter of a pound of unsalted hog's lard which has been washed in water with the yolks of two new-laid eggs and a tablespoonful of honey, and adding as much fine oatmeal as will work the mixture into a paste.

R. T.—The latest and most accurate census of the whole human family gives nearly eight hundred millions; or, perhaps, seven hundred and seventy-five millions would be more correct. If the religious sects both of Brahmanism and Buddhism (which are essentially the same, and which occupy the most of Asia and its islands) are reckoned together, they will make two hundred and seventy millions; and are more numerous than any other. The Christian sects form the next highest number, being computed at two hundred and fifty or sixty millions. Of these the Roman Catholics are the most numerous, being about one hundred and thirty millions; the Greek Church half that number; and the Protestants nearly the same. The Mahometans are computed at about one hundred millions, the Jews at about four millions, and Pagans one hundred or one hundred and fifty millions.

D. M.—The word utopian means fanciful, chimerical, ideal, based upon imaginary perfections. It comes from the word "Utopia," which literally means "no place," and was invented by Sir Thomas More in the first half of the sixteenth century. He applied the name Utopia to an imaginary island which he represents to have been discovered by a companion of Amerigo Vesputci, and as enjoying the utmost perfection in laws, politics, religion, etc., in contradistinction to the defects in all these respects which then existed in every government on the globe. This work of Sir Thomas More occasioned a profound sensation, and excited in the hearts of thousands of the best scholars and most chivalric gentlemen of the time an unappeasable desire to see the beautiful

dream of the author embodied in the actual, everyday business of life. Since that day the word Utopia has passed into all the languages of Christendom to signify a state of ideal perfection.

RED COAT and **SENTRY GO**, two non-commissioned officers in the army, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Red Coat is twenty-one, tall, dark, handsome. Sentry Go is medium height, of a loving disposition.

T. V. C. and **F. J. R.**, naval schoolmasters, would like to correspond with two young ladies from eighteen to twenty-one. T. V. C. is twenty-two, tall, dark. F. J. R. is twenty-three, medium height, fair. Both are musical.

MARIUS and **MELITE**, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Melite is fair, grey eyes, medium height, fond of home. Marius is tall, fair, brown hair and eyes, fond of home and children.

HANDSOME LOGGLE and **CAPTAN BAR**, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Handsome Loggle is twenty-two, good-looking, blue eyes, dark brown hair, of a loving disposition. Capstan Bar is twenty-four, good-looking, hazel eyes, light brown hair, fond of home and children.

RUTH, twenty, medium height, dark, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of music, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two.

GEORGE, twenty-three, medium height, good-looking, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady.

ISABEL, twenty-two, would like to correspond with a young gentleman. She is handsome, domesticated, fond of music.

BASHFUL WILLIAM, **UNCLE JOE** and **HAPPY NOBBY**, three Royal Marines, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Bashful William is twenty-three, considered good-looking, dark hair and eyes, fond of home. Uncle Joe is twenty-two, fond of home and children. Happy Nobby is twenty-four, dark, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-five.

KAT'S APPEAL.

Do not leave me, Willie darling,
Hear my own and story through,
They would but deceive thee, darling,
What they tell thee is not true;
Could I show thee, Willie darling,
This poor, bleeding heart of mine,
Thou wouldst not scorn its pleading, darling,
All its dearest hopes are thine.

Once we were happy, Willie darling,
In our own sweet cottage home,
Ere they met thee, Willie darling,
And they tempted thee to roam;
Hed them not, dear Willie darling,
Say thy wanderings all are o'er,
And I'll love thee, Willie darling,
Oh, what can I do e'er more?

Stay with me, my Willie darling,
And we may be happy still,
In our love, dear Willie darling,
In our cottage by the rill,
But should you leave me, Willie darling,
Only this I have to say:
My heart is ever Willie darling's,
Though he cast the gift away.

E. F. S.

N. C. C., twenty-six, medium height, fair, blue eyes, considered good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-five, good-looking, fond of home.

ONE BELL, **SWEET OUT** and **FETCH THE GROG**, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. One Bell is twenty, tall, dark, considered good-looking, fond of home and children. Sweet Out is twenty-six, short, dark, fond of music and dancing. Fetch the Grog is twenty-one, medium height, fair, fond of home and children.

CLARICE, medium height, dark, good-looking, fond of home and dancing, would like to correspond with a young gentleman between eighteen and nineteen.

NEMOPHILA, twenty-one, tall, fair, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age.

MABEL and **LOU**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Mabel is twenty-four, fair, dark hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition. Lou is twenty-one, fair, blue eyes, fond of home.

KATE G., nineteen, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two.

R. T., twenty-four, tall, dark, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of music and singing, would like to correspond with a young lady.

P. S. G. and **G. N. D.**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. P. S. G. is twenty-five, tall, dark, good-looking, loving, fond of home and music. G. N. D. is twenty-eight, medium height, fair, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

N. A. G. and **R. H. I.**, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. N. A. G. is twenty-seven, medium height, fair, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of dancing. R. H. I. is twenty-five, medium height, dark hair and eyes, loving, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be twenty-two, and twenty-five.

MARIE S. and **MARGARET OF ANJOU**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Marie S. is nineteen. Margaret of Anjou is twenty-one.

GEORGE H., twenty-three, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

FANNY and **ELISA**, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Fanny is twenty-two, tall, fair, brown hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Elisa is twenty-four, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing.

THOMAS M., twenty, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

A. H. G., eighteen, medium height, dark hair, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady between seventeen and eighteen with a view to matrimony.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

FRED is responded to by—Sally, nineteen, tall, fair, brown hair and eyes, fond of music.

LOYAL AU MORT by—Minnie, twenty-three, tall, fair, loving, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home.

N. E. F. by—E. S. B. D., medium height, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

LILIAN by—Reginald, nineteen, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of music.

L. by—S. R. D., tall, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

FIRST LOOKOUT by—Annie, seventeen, fair, grey eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition.

NEXT ASHWAIR by—Jennie, seventeen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, loving.

MILLY by—Dingy Johnny, twenty, medium height, good-looking, fond of home and children.

MISNIE by—F. W. F., twenty-two, tall, good-looking, fond of dancing.

POLAR BEAR by—J. P., tall, fair.

MILLY by—One Bell.

ALBERT S. by—Loving Sallie, twenty-one, medium height, brown hair, hazel eyes, loving, fond of home and children.

MILLY by—F. B.

JAMES by—M. S., twenty-five, medium height, blue eyes.

E. F. by—F. J., thirty, fair.

ANNIE L. by—Henry, twenty-four, tall, dark, loving.

MILLY by—Lively R. N., twenty-three, tall, fair, good-looking.

SCOT M. by—Violet, nineteen, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

WORKING ENGINEER by—Kitty.

ALBERT S. by—Alberta, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes.

KATE by—Alfred, twenty-one, tall, dark.

ALICE by—George, twenty, medium height, fair, good-looking.

SCOT M. by—Nancy, eighteen, tall, dark, domesticated, fond of home.

ALBERT S. by—Julia, twenty, fair, blue eyes.

COCKING PLATE by—Indian Pink, twenty-one, medium height, good-looking, fond of home and dancing.

FULL by—Margaret, tall, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

JACK by—Alice, short, dark hair and eyes, fond of home and music.

HARRY by—Rosie, tall, dark, of a loving disposition.

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